

CRICKET 30
McCAGUE PUTS
HIS BACK INTO
ENGLAND VICTORY



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30P

THE TIMES

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WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 22 1993

Commons debate 'within weeks'

MPs to vote on allowing gay sex at 18

By PHILIP WEBSTER
AND EDWARD GORMAN

CONSERVATIVE MPs are to be given a free vote early next year on whether to lower the age of consent for homosexuals from 21 to 18 or 16.

Labour MPs will also be allowed to follow their consciences in a Commons vote that could take place within the next few weeks, and last night battle lines were being drawn for a decision that will split both main parties.

Political campaigners for reform predicted that a vote for a change to 18 had a good chance of success, although there was doubt that the age of consent for homosexuals would be brought into line with heterosexuals at 16. Gay pressure groups will be disappointed with anything less.

Sir Ian McKellen, the actor and campaigner for gay rights, said news that the Commons would be voting on

Some Tory MPs fear that a free vote on lowering the homosexual age of consent will give a wrong signal in John Major's "back to basics" campaign

a change to the law was exciting and significant. But he said that reducing it to 18, a compromise known to be favoured by several cabinet ministers and possibly the prime minister, would be worse than doing nothing.

The votes — and one on capital punishment — are expected to be taken during the detailed Commons stages of the Criminal Justice Bill, which will have a second reading when MPs return on January 11. The Bill is thought by ministers to be drawn sufficiently widely to permit votes on both issues if the Speaker Betty Boothroyd so decides.

Some Tory MPs and ministers are uneasy about John Major's decision to allow a free vote, fearing that it could give the wrong signal at a time when he is trying to promote his "back to basics" approach. Some hope that the so-called "payroll" vote of MPs and ministers will be mobilised to prevent change.

Tony Blair, the shadow home secretary, also believes the issue is one of conscience. Past Labour policy documents have backed a lowering of the age to 16, but there was no commitment in the last manifesto. The Liberal Democrats backed a common age of consent for homosexuals and heterosexuals in their 1992 election manifesto.

The Conservative campaign for reform is being led by Edwin Currie, the former minister and MP for South Derbyshire, who said yesterday:

"The law as it is drawn at the moment does not protect the people it is designed to protect. At 17 a young man can have children, join the army but cannot choose who to sleep with. It is wrong and many other countries in Europe have shown it to be wrong."

But John Townsend, MP for Bridlington and an executive member of the 1992 Committee of Conservative backbenchers, voiced the unease of many when he said that a change in the law was "difficult to reconcile with a return to traditional values".

The prime minister first indicated an interest in homosexual law reform when he met Sir Ian McKellen at 10 Downing Street in 1991. Since then, there have been reports that Mr Major has told MPs privately that he backs a reduction to the age of 18.

That would not, however, satisfy Sir Ian, who said that a decision not to reduce the age of consent to 16 would be to reject the principle of equality between heterosexuals and homosexuals. "Reducing it to 18 would be a disaster. It would be an insult," he said.

The Rt Rev Noel Jones, the Bishop of Sodor and Man who is a leading opponent of any change in the law, said he was totally against any move to reduce it to 16. If change had to happen, then 18 would be more acceptable. Bishop Jones said he thought Sir Ian was out of touch with the vast majority of public opinion who still considered homosexuality to be morally wrong.

Boy dies after being rescued from icy river

By PAUL WILKINSON AND DOMINIC KENNEDY

FIREMEN pulled a seven-year-old boy from an icy, swollen river after he had been swept down stream for more than a mile after a car crashed into the water.

Paramedics fought a desperate battle to revive the youngster who was unconscious but still showing signs of life after at least 20 minutes in the river. He was taken eight miles to hospital but died shortly afterwards.

The car was retrieved from the river last night five hours after coming off the road. The body of the driver was still propped up in the front seat.

Six people were travelling in a silver BMW when it plunged into the River Nidd, near

York, yesterday afternoon. The car quickly sank, but four people, including the boy's ten-year-old sister and his mother who are from Knaresborough, managed to get out and were rescued. A senior fire officer involved in the rescue, Steve Cluddery, said: "It appears the boy slipped from the grip of a man as they struggled out of the sinking car. He was carried downstream by the undercurrent and we were told he was out of sight when we arrived. Several firemen and two of our paramedics ran down the bank for almost a mile before they saw the child bobbing about in the water. Two firemen pulled him out." Continued on page 2, col 3



Nicholas Soames, the food minister, with his bride Serena Smith, daughter of a former Conservative MP, after their wedding at Shottesbrooke Park, Maidenhead, Berkshire, yesterday. The Prince of Wales was among the guests

Diplomats try to breathe new life into special relationship

By PHILIP WEBSTER IN LONDON AND MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

BRITISH and American government officials are trying to fix an early White House meeting in the new year between President Clinton and John Major amid signs that the relationship between London and Washington remains strained.

Although Mr Major and Mr Clinton are said by close colleagues to have developed a good working partnership, bitterness persists among Mr Clinton's White House staff over the action of the Tory Party in sending workers to help the Republican presidential campaign in 1992.

The Prime Minister has made only one visit to the White House since Mr Clinton became President and the talk on the diplomatic circuit has been the absence this year of a

pre-Christmas invitation from Washington, a regular event during the Reagan and Bush years. Mr Major has, of course, met Mr Clinton at international events, such as the G7 summit in Tokyo, but he is not regarded as a top priority by the American leaders' most senior advisers.

Lingering resentment at the Tory party's intervention is blamed for the frosty atmosphere. Mr Clinton is the sort of politician who divides people into the loyal and disloyal, but he cannot afford to let that permanently sour relations with America's closest ally.

Although Mr Major and Mr Clinton are said to have a perfectly amicable relationship,

the President's senior Administration staff are in no mood to forgive and forget, according to American officials. A senior American official said: "These guys are now all over the White House, and they have long memories."

Officials claim that the "schedulers", the senior advisers who organise the visits of overseas leaders to Mr Clinton and his trips abroad, are among those least sympathetic to the British government. One said: "Our main worry at the moment is fitting in Rud Lubbers [the Dutch prime minister]. Britain is down the list."

Senior presidential aides unfavourably disposed to Mr Major may well include George Stephanopoulos, communications director of Mr

Clinton's campaign, and Bruce Lindsey, his campaign director. Both are now members of Mr Clinton's small inner circle at the White House and enjoy direct access to the Oval Office.

Mr Stephanopoulos has continued on page 2, col 1

Relationship strained, page 7

Leading article, page 13

Owen hits at Clinton on Bosnia

FROM EVE-ANN PRENTICE IN GENEVA



Owen: speculation he may quit peace process

LORD Owen has attacked President Clinton, blaming the American Administration for prolonging the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The European Union peace negotiator said the war would have been over "a long time ago" if George Bush had been re-elected last year.

Mr Clinton should have backed the Vance-Owen plan, Lord Owen said in an interview with the Dutch magazine *Elsevier*. But the president thought the Muslims

came off too badly under the plan for ten semi-autonomous provinces, and that Serb aggression would be rewarded with too much territory.

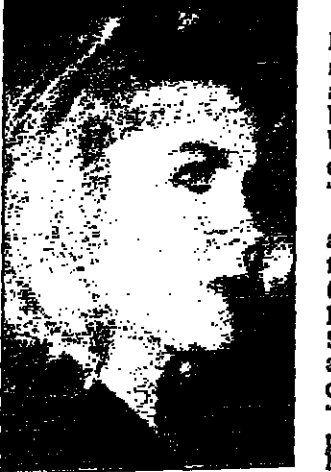
The attack has increased speculation that Lord Owen may quit the peace process.

In Geneva, a Croat delegation from a new "independent province" of Posavina in northern Bosnia turned up unannounced when the peace talks resumed yesterday.

Socialist confidence, page 7

First Lady denounces 'trash for cash' sex claims

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER
IN WASHINGTON



Gennifer Flowers: cited in sexual allegations

HILLARY Clinton yesterday responded to startling new allegations about her husband's extra-marital activities by asserting that the President's enemies were out to "destroy" him.

The First Lady denounced as "trash for cash" the allegations made by members of Mr Clinton's security team when he was governor of Arkansas. She said his accusers were acting "for political and financial gain". They were trying to "tear him down" just when his popularity was increasing and he had grown more confident. "My overwhelming feeling is sadness. Here we are again

The Times has obtained the rights to reprint the full text of the *American Spectator* article detailing the allegations of President Clinton's infidelities. It will appear tomorrow.

with these outrageous charges," an outwardly calm Mrs Clinton told an interviewer as part of what appeared to be a White House strategy of discrediting the accusers.

Four state troopers who were part of Mr Clinton's bodyguard claimed in the conservative *American Spectator* magazine on Monday that they helped facilitate countless sexual encounters for their boss throughout his governorship and even after his election as President. This followed claims during his

campaign that he had conducted an affair with Gennifer Flowers, a nightclub singer.

The troopers described angry scenes between the Clintons, claimed the President's aides had tried to silence them, and alleged that Mrs Clinton had had an affair with Vincent Foster, the deputy White House counsel who killed himself last July.

Mr Clinton's supporters have pointed out that the troopers plan to write a book about their allegations and that Cliff Jackson, their Ar-

kansas lawyer, has long been an enemy of the President's.

The *American Spectator* has also been a persistent critic of Mr Clinton's, but the relatively liberal *Los Angeles Times* had also been investigating the troopers' charges, obtained sworn affidavits from two of them and yesterday repeated the allegations.

The White House confirmed that over the past two months Mr Clinton had telephoned various people in Arkansas, including members of his old security team, about the allegations. However, it firmly denied he was trying to silence the troopers through improper pressure or inducements.

Sex stories, page 9

British Gas loses supply monopoly

By ROSS TIEHAN
AND PHILIP BASSETT

BRITISH Gas's monopoly of sales of gas to households is to end in 1996. The decision is expected to mean savings of as much as £40 on an average annual bill of £400.

The Government's decision comes after this summer's completion of a year-long enquiry by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Michael Heseltine, President of the Board of Trade, rejected the commission's proposals for a break-up of British Gas. Instead, he plans a progressive opening of the domestic market to be fully in place by April 1996.

Mr Heseltine said last night: "It's competition which makes the pressure which keeps prices low."

Monopoly ends, page 17

Great gas rush, 18

Pennington, page 19

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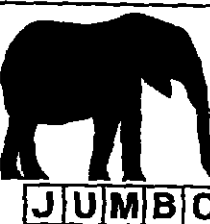
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IN THE TIMES
AT CHRISTMAS

Best of the
season

On Christmas Eve, *The Times* will bring you all the fun, entertainment and essential information you expect from Weekend and Vision.



In Weekend, there are pages of games, quizzes and competitions, including our famous Jumbo Crossword (and there's another on New Year's Day).

Brain-teasing

It wouldn't be Christmas without Paul Heiney's farmyard nativity. But this was the year when Joseph caught 'flu...



In Vision...

A full guide to nine days of television and radio, from Richard Morrison on *Porgy and Bess* and Laurie Taylor on Armand Amannucci, to the best of the season's films.

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Man killed himself after CSA trebled maintenance bill

BY ANDREW PIERCE

A CURATOR at a state home left a suicide note in the style of Byron, his hero, after the Child Support Agency more than trebled his maintenance payments overnight, an inquest was told yesterday.

Graham Clay, 32, was found earlier this month by a colleague. Mr Clay hanged himself from a beam at Newstead Abbey near Mansfield — the home of Lord Byron — where he worked.

He was discovered the day after a final CSA demand arrived in the post, increasing his monthly maintenance payments to his estranged wife from £86 to £297.

The inquest was told that Mr Clay had been distressed by the divorce from his wife Wendy in October and separation from his children Hayley, 8, and Joanna, 9.

He feared that the size of the CSA order would leave him unable to afford Christmas presents for the girls. The day before he died, Mr Clay had promised his former wife that he would make his regular weekend telephone call to his children.

An agency official was present at the inquest, but while "expressing sorrow for what had happened" declined to make any comment on the case, which has been seized on by MPs of all political parties to criticise alleged shortcomings in the new system.

The suicide note said: "I can't fight any longer. I have suffered enough. Life is but a passing phase. A plant that flowers for a season and then dies. Why should I carry on?"

"I have lost everything — my home, my children, my will to think of a future. No one will listen. I did my best. I was a good father. All I ever wanted was love. All I got was pain." The note did not mention the agency.

Dr Nigel Chapman, the coroner, recording a verdict of suicide, said the CSA demand had played on the mind of Mr Clay but he did not criticise the agency.

He said: "It is not for me to apportion blame. From the evidence which I have heard he had worries, and one of the main worries he had was about money. It is clear that

the amount of money he was going to have to pay had a tremendous effect upon his mind. But whether he thought he couldn't afford it or couldn't cope any more, I don't know."

The court was told that Mr Clay's rucksack, found near his body, contained many letters from the CSA. Wendy Clay, 29, told the inquest in Mansfield that they had discussed the letter from the agency the day before his suicide and that he had been distressed.

"It was the realisation that it was a large amount of money and there was nothing he could do," she said. He had not appeared suicidal that evening.

"If I had had any idea that he was going to do that, I would not have let him go home. The last thing he said was that he would phone the girls on Sunday," she said.

The inquest was told that Mr Clay earned on average £170 a week at the 15th-century abbey. He had agreed at court to pay £86 a month for his two children.

Brian Ayres, a fellow curator who found Mr Clay hanging on December 4, told the hearing that his colleague had been depressed and often talked about the CSA, saying he would not be able to afford to buy his children Christmas presents. He had advised him to "stand up and fight them."

Mrs Clay, who married in 1983 and separated earlier this year, said her former husband had often talked about suicide and had come home with marks on his neck which he alleged were caused when he tried to hang himself.

She said the day before he died he talked to her about the CSA demands. "I was saying all the encouragement I could."

Mr Clay's aunt, Josephine Clay, who took him into her home at Mapperley, Nottingham, after the marriage broke down, told the inquest that the CSA letters had worried her nephew. "He said he could not afford it," she said.

Speaking after the hearing, Mr Clay's brother Barry said he hoped the tragedy would lead to change at the agency. He said: "We hope that something will be done and it will never happen to another family."

The coroner said the sad feature was that the Clay children had been left without a father. Any amounts of money involved were incidental, he said.

Agency demands 1p from father

BY A STAFF REPORTER

THE Child Support Agency was accused last night of hounding a father by threatening court action over an unpaid debt of 1p.

The full might of the agency was brought to bear on Graham Hey, a computer programmer from Manchester, when he sent a cheque to his former wife for £232.82, rather than £232.83.

A two-page letter, posted first-class, was sent by the agency to Mr Hey's home in Woodhouse Park, chastising him for the error. It stated that interest was being charged on the unpaid debt at 1 per cent higher than the bank base rate.

The agency said it was also considering an "order taking the debt from his salary."

An incredulous Mr Hey was taken aback by the agency's demand for a £1 administrative fee for the proposed salary deduction.

He said: "It is ludicrous. I offered to add the penny to my next bill but was told that was not possible. When I think of how much time and money

has been spent on stamps, telephone calls and people's time it makes me furious."

Mr Hey, who is now remarried, has been paying the mortgage and water rates at his former wife's home. He said: "Everything was fine until the agency stepped in. I have never shirked my responsibility. But the demand for one penny is the final straw."

Alf Morris, the Labour MP for Wythenshawe, has taken up the case and is sending the file to John Major. He said: "The agency is filled with as much Christmas spirit as Ebenezer Scrooge. It looks as if it is prepared to spend the price of a penny black to achieve a single penny."

"The cost of trying to get my constituent to spend a penny is enormously disproportionate. The Child Support Agency has one of the worst records of any government agency. This is a new low."

A spokesman for the Child Support Agency said: "This sort of thing should not happen."

Sex-change father loses appeal to write book

BY A STAFF REPORTER

A FATHER who underwent a sex change and won custody of his three children from his former wife yesterday failed to have an injunction lifted enabling him to write a book about his experiences.

In a reserved judgment at the Court of Appeal, Lord Justice Neill and Mr Justice Ward also barred the media from publishing anything that might lead to identification of the children, a boy aged 18 and girls aged 13 and 10.

The judges said that while there were matters of public interest, there had been two previous occasions when the media had covered the case in detail. Newspapers had named and photographed the children, who had then become figures of fun.

The father had a sex-change operation in March this year after living for years as a transvestite. The judges, who referred to him as "she", said he had wanted to publish a book about his life and marriage, which broke down in 1983 after eight years.

They said it had been an unhappy marriage because of the husband's ambivalence about his sexuality, which went back to his early childhood. After the divorce in 1984, the wife was granted custody, by which time her husband was regularly dressing as a woman. The wife's distress led to a nervous breakdown in 1987 and the children were removed to the care of their father.

The judges upheld an injunction preventing the father from giving any publicity to his sex change that could lead to the identification of the children. The injunction will remain in force until 2001, when the children will no longer be minors.



Honeysuckle Weeks, left, and Helena Bonham-Carter, who share the role of Faith in *A Dark Adapted Eye*, by Ruth Rendell writing as Barbara Vine, to be shown on BBC1 on January 2 and 3

Daughter fails to win control of Moore sculptures

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL

HENRY Moore's daughter yesterday lost her multi-million pound legal battle to wrest ownership of some of the sculptor's finest work from the foundation set up in his name.

If it had succeeded, the High Court action by Mary Moore, 46, could have led to the break-up of the collection housed by the Henry Moore Foundation. Ms Moore, who sued as a trustee of her parents' wills, wanted a ruling that hundreds of unsold sculptures and other works by her father created in the last ten years of his life, and his copies of earlier works, remained his personal property and part of his disposable

estate. The charitable Henry Moore Foundation and its trading arm HMF Enterprises, based at the sculptor's old home, Hoglands, Perry Green, Hertfordshire, successfully argued that the works were their property under a service agreement that Moore signed in January 1977.

He established the foundation in 1976 to promote public appreciation of sculpture, particularly his own works, and to ease crippling tax assessments.

When Moore died in 1986, he left his estate to his Russian-born wife Irina. She died nearly three years later, leaving everything to Mary, the couple's only child, and her three children. In a reserved judgment, Mr Justice Evans-Lombe rejected the

claim to ownership by Ms Moore, who sued under her married name, Mary Spencer Moore Danowski. He held that the agreement signed by the sculptor unambiguously said that ownership of work executed under its terms was vested in the service company. The judge also held that copies by Moore since 1977 of earlier works used materials and facilities provided by the company and belonged to it.

Ms Moore, of Compton Valence, Dorset, who is married to the art dealer Raymond Danowski, had claimed that a significant proportion of Moore's works in the last ten years of his life remained his property. Ownership of about half the sculptures held by the foundation, in-

cluding celebrated works such as *Three Piece Sculpture*, *Vertebrae* and *Mother and Child*, each worth more than £1 million, had been in dispute.

Mrs Moore, who is on holiday in South Africa and unavailable for comment, was ordered to pay the costs of the case, unofficially estimated at more than £200,000. Her lawyers said later she was disappointed with the judgment and that they would be studying it before advising her on whether to appeal.

Mrs Moore was the foundation's first chairman and remained a trustee until she resigned in 1980 in opposition to plans to develop Hoglands and build a visitors' centre.

Youth a violent and dangerous menace — judge

16-year-old paper shop killer jailed indefinitely

BY ANDREW PIERCE

A TEENAGER was ordered to be detained indefinitely at Her Majesty's pleasure yesterday for what the prosecution described as a "cold-blooded murder", which he carried out when he was high on drink and drugs.

Avie Andrews, 16, whose father Barry is an actor and has appeared in television programmes such as *Harry's Game* and *The Bill*, was branded a "violent and dangerous menace" by Judge Grigson at the Old Bailey.

The well-spoken teenager had been convicted on Monday of murdering Amaranath Bandaratilleka, 32, in a newsagent's shop at Hammer-smith, west London, in February. Andrews fired a sawn-off shotgun at point-blank range into the chest of the barrister's clerk after ordering him to turn out his pockets, which contained 26p.

Mr Andrews, who persuaded his son to give himself up to the police after he confessed to the killing, looked shocked when the verdict was delivered. He had told the court how he listened in horror as his son had confessed. "It was an incredible moment... so difficult to believe," he said.

The judge said that Andrews, who was a student at Ealing College at the time, had been described as someone of average intelligence who was mature above his years. He said: "It is a tragic irony that had you not filled yourself



Andrews: drugs said to be his downfall

with drugs you would have been something like that at the time."

The judge said that Andrews, who showed no emotion when sentence was passed, had ruined his life and that of Sam Perman, 18, who was present at the robbery. Perman, a friend of Andrews since school, will be sentenced in January. He was remanded in custody for psychiatric reports after being convicted of manslaughter.

Andrews, the father of a five-month-old girl, admitted robbery and possessing a loaded sawn-off shotgun. He also admitted robbing drug dealers of £650 of cannabis at gunpoint three weeks before the murder. He was sentenced to eight years and six years for the robberies and three years for possession of a firearm

with intent. The sentences will run concurrently.

The court was told how the youth, who had enjoyed a classic middle-class upbringing, had "gone off the rails" after taking cannabis at 11 and becoming addicted to heroin when he was 15. He had sold fake Ecstasy tablets, made from crushed cold cure pills, to pay for his drug habit.

On the night of the murder he had been drinking heavily, "smoking cannabis constantly" and taking drug tablets before deciding to rob the newsagent's "on the spur of the moment". He was desperate for money to buy more drugs.

He pulled a red scarf across his face, forced the shop owner to empty the till and took a charity collection box. He stuffed his pockets full of cigarettes before pointing his gun at the legal clerk. Andrews, from Hammersmith, wept in court as he denied murder and insisted the gun had gone off accidentally as he left the shop.

Dorian Lovell-Park, for the prosecution, said that when the gun went off "accidentally", it didn't make a hole in the ceiling, it didn't make a hole in the floor, it didn't make a hole in Mr Banda's.

Edward Quist-Arcton, for the defence, said no one regretted the "senseless waste of life" more than Andrews, who had felt more "aggressive and militant" carrying a loaded gun. He said that drugs had been his downfall.

Plácido Domingo, José Carreras and Luciano Pavarotti acclaiming the audience at the Rome concert in 1990 that led to huge record sales

Towering tenors prepare for a £7m encore

BY RICHARD MORRISON

THE recording of *The Three Tenors*, the most successful in the history of classical music, is to have a sequel.

Luciano Pavarotti, Plácido Domingo and José Carreras, whose concert in Rome on the eve of the 1990 Football World Cup final sold ten million records and cassettes and one million videos, will be reunited for *Encore — The Three Tenors*, which is to be staged on July 16 next year at the 56,000-seat Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles.

No recording deal has yet been reached, but it looks certain that Decca, the company which released the Rome album, is out of the running. In 1990, only Pavarotti had an exclusive recording contract, and his long relationship with Decca made that label the obvious choice for the *Three Tenors* album.

Earlier this year, Peter Andry, vice-president of Warner Classics, signed Carreras to an exclusive contract, giving Warner the power of a veto to back up its own claim.

Tibor Rudas, the Los Angeles-based Hungarian promoter who has put on most of Pavarotti's mass-audience concerts, is in charge of the Los Angeles concert and is looking for the highest return on the event.

The bidding between recording companies for the event went high quickly. EMI Classics dropped out at

\$6 million. Sony Classical abandoned hope at \$8 million. Decca hesitated at \$10 million. Sources say that Warner has settled with a commitment of \$11 million (£7.4m), though no final agreement has yet been signed.

Domingo, who has studiously avoided signing exclusively with any company, still holds the joker's card. In London last week, he went out of his way to reveal disenchantment with Decca. "They obeyed the contract of the *Three Tenors* recording to the letter," he said. "But they made so much money out of it they should have paid us more. Of course, this concert on July 16 must be recorded, but I am very happy it is not going to be Decca." Though no deal has been

finalised, Decca seems resigned to not having the Los Angeles concert in its catalogue. "No one wants to end up in a legal war," said Roland Kommerell, Decca's president.

Few in the record industry believe that *Encore — The Three Tenors* will sell nearly as well as the Rome concert. An outlay of \$11 million, plus production costs and promotion, means that six million units will have to be sold to break even.

The only certainty is that, barring illness, the concert will take place. Domingo is looking forward to it. "It will probably not be as exciting as the first, but it will be better artistically because it is always better the second time," he said.

Newsman's grieving widow died from drink

BY A STAFF REPORTER

THE widow of Leonard Parkin, the television journalist, drank herself to death a month after his funeral, an inquest was told yesterday.

Barbara Parkin, 63, was found unconscious by her bed in October at the retirement cottage which the ITN anchor-man had bought for her in Pickering, North Yorkshire. Attempts by paramedics to resuscitate her failed and she died at the cottage from acute alcohol poisoning.

The inquest at Scarborough was told that tests revealed she had also taken tablets of paracetamol and temazepam before her death. The drugs were at normal therapeutic levels, but the alcohol content of 309mg in 100ml of blood was well above the fatal risk level.

Mrs Parkin's son Jeremy, 36, a restaurateur based in Florida, had been working in London on the day of his mother's death and had been due to visit her. He told the inquest: "She was an alcoholic. She had had treatment on many many occasions, the last being 12 weeks at a Nottingham clinic in the spring. But it had not been successful."

Tim Ritson, a family friend, told the inquest he had seen Mrs Parkin three times on the day of her death following telephone calls for help. "She was very agitated."

Forty-eight hours earlier, she had been seen walking barefoot in the streets near her home in her night clothes. The last time he saw her alive she was heading back from an office in the town centre, an empty quarter bottle of whisky was later found in the house.

He added: "She seemed to bear up very well immediately after Mr Parkin's death. It was only two or three weeks after his death that she seemed to go down."

Michael Oakley, the Scarborough and Ryedale coroner, recording a verdict of accidental death, said: "It's clear that she had suffered from alcoholism for some years. The large amount of alcohol in her blood could prove fatal, even to people used to alcohol."

Mrs Parkin, who had been married to Mr Parkin for 38 years but had been separated for two years, retired to live near him in Pickering four months before he developed terminal cancer.

Girl's killer says he was driven by desire

THE self-confessed killer of a 12-year-old girl described yesterday how, driven by lust, he had suffocated the child in his garden shed.

Keith Collard, 24, cried as he told an Old Bailey jury that he had been driven by a desire to touch a woman's body. Armed with an imitation gun, he had dragged Katrina Monk into the shed from an alleyway alongside his home.

Mr Collard, unemployed, of Enfield, north London, denies murdering Katrina but has admitted manslaughter. He told the jury: "I didn't mean to kill her or cause her serious harm. I just wanted to keep her quiet."

He described how he had gripped the girl's throat and put his hand over her mouth to stop her screaming and then realised that she had died. "She did not move. I nudged her a second time and she keeled over. Then I realised she was dead. I felt faint and sick when I realised what I had done."

Mr Collard admitted that just had driven him to attack Katrina, who was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. Moments before attacking Katrina, he had seen another schoolgirl walk past his garden gate. The court was told he went to his bedroom, picked up an imitation handgun and returned to the garden.

He told the court: "I heard footsteps and then I saw a woman's head going along. I approached her from behind and put the gun to the side of her head. I pulled her back and placed her against a wall in front of my garden gate."

The court has heard that Katrina's body was found in the alleyway the next day. Her hands and feet had been tied and a plastic bag had been placed over her head. Her body was discovered only a hundred yards from her home in Enfield.

Mr Collard, who has no previous convictions, said that he had had sexual intercourse with a girl only once. He had had a girl friend for several months but was not going out with anyone at the time.

He admitted he had taken women's underwear from washing lines in his teens and again when he was about 20, and agreed he had worn women's underwear in his room at the time of the killing.

The trial continues today.

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opening

Charity tries to demolish wildlife haven left by widow

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, COUNTRYSIDE CORRESPONDENT

A MURDERED widow's last wish to have her garden kept as a nature reserve has been refused by the wildlife charity to which she left the property. The charity plans instead to raise money by building houses on the land.

Doris Shelley, 82, died after being attacked last February by an intruder in her cottage at Marjesham near Ipswich in Suffolk, where she had lived for 40 years. The crime attracted national media attention, although the killer has not been found.



Shelley: bequeathed home as nature haven

a neighbour and friend, said: "I am horrified and I am sure Mrs Shelley would be appalled if she had known what was planned."

"She loved her garden and kept it overgrown as a haven for wildlife. She always told people that its future was secure because it was going to be taken over by a wildlife organisation."

Mrs Shelley, who lived on her own and had no television, used to entertain herself by using old food that drew badgers, foxes and other animals into her garden. She chose to stay in the cottage, rather than move to an old people's home, despite being attacked two years earlier by a burglar who beat her and left her locked in her bathroom.

Hilary Cross, a spokesman for the wildlife charity, said: "Mrs Shelley was a long-standing member of the society and was well aware that we do not run reserves in this country. Her will also made clear we were under no legal obligation. The National Westminster Bank, the executor, has a duty to maximise the value of the bequest. With planning permission, the property might be sold to a developer for £150,000. In its present state it is worth no more than £50,000."

There remains a chance that the garden could be saved if its destruction infringes wildlife legislation. Robert Chamberlain, assistant director in the district council's planning department, said: "We have been told there may be a badger set on the property, which could affect the planning application. But it is not for us to take a view on what Mrs Shelley intended in her will."

Four hurt in wave of animal lib bombs

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

SCOTLAND Yard warned possible targets of attacks by animal liberation militants to be on their guard last night after four people received hospital treatment when a parcel bomb exploded and another four devices were intercepted.

A new group calling itself The Justice Department was linked to the attacks yesterday by a spokesman for animal rights activists. The group has carried out several attacks in recent months.

The bombs were packed into 2ft cardboard tubes sold at post offices. One exploded as it was opened at the offices of a company that analyses

samples sent by veterinary surgeons. A man aged 45 suffered burns and an abdominal injury. Three people were treated for shock and temporary deafness. The detached house at Small Dole, Sussex, was formerly used by a company breeding monkeys for research which has been attacked before.

Letter bombs were defused at a rabbit breeder's home at Chadderton, Greater Manchester, at a biological research institute in South Kensington, London, at a Godalming sorting office, Surrey, and at Hyline Rabbits in Warrington, Cheshire.

Family meets again 50 years after 'Blitz death'



Keith as he was when his mother last saw him



Keith, 51, is due to be reunited with his mother, Joan Hillard-Reid, 76

By A STAFF REPORTER

A WOMAN will be reunited with her long lost son this Christmas, 50 years after he was told she had died in the Blitz.

Joan Hillard-Reid, 76, last saw her son Keith, 51, when he was 18 months old and her marriage to his father Stephen Potter broke down.

The child was taken to South Africa by his father and brought up in the belief that his mother had died in an air raid attack on London in 1944.

However, when Keith Potter's wife Yvonne visited Eng-

land a year ago, she tried to trace the family and discovered that her husband's mother had not died in the Blitz.

Since Mrs Hillard-Reid had remarried, the two went blank and the couple asked the International Red Cross for help.

After ten months, they traced Keith Potter's mother to her home in Swindon, Wiltshire, and they were able to talk on the telephone.

Mrs Hillard-Reid has arranged a reunion where her eldest son will meet his half-brother Chris, 47, and his

stepfather Bill for Christmas. Mrs Hillard-Reid said: "Every Christmas and on his birthday, I have been longing and wondering about Keith. I always thought we would meet again."

"For years, I had kept quiet about losing Keith but, as soon as I got to know Bill well, I told him all about it. The fact that Keith is coming here will be the greatest Christmas present."

Mrs Hillard-Reid's first and second husbands have died and she married Bill five years ago.

Publican loses lease test case

By TONY DAWE

HUNDREDS of publicans face eviction in the new year after a Norwich licensee lost a High Court challenge to the way the big brewers are imposing tough new leases.

In a test case involving James Little, of The Alexandra, and Courage, the brewers, Mr Justice Ferris decided the publican did not have the right to take advantage of an option clause to renew his existing lease.

Mr Little, with many other Courage tenants, had wanted to renew the lease for five years but GrandMet, which has taken over Courage's public houses, insisted that he sign a new 20-year lease at double the rent. The judge ruled in favour of the brewers because Mr Little had failed to agree a further business plan as required by the terms of the original lease.

Alan Temple, of the Courage Leasaholders' Association, said later that the ruling would affect 250 other publicans with similar leases. Another 200 publicans, who are protected by the Landlord and Tenant Act, face further court battles.

Mr Little vowed to fight on.

Season's Beatings

Tortured dogs. Wounded horses. Kittens used as punch bags.

Every year, at Christmas, man's inhumanity to animals takes an ironically seasonal twist. And a very noticeable turn for the worse.

For the beaten and the abused there is no season of goodwill.

And for the RSPCA there is no peace on earth.

Cruelty never takes a holiday. At Christmas, the RSPCA's 300 uniformed inspectors face one of their busiest times of the year.

For them it's hardly the season to be jolly.

Beneath the veneer of society's merriment, they tackle the realities of its brutality.

Every day they will answer more than 2500 calls for help.

Some, they won't reach in time. Suffocated puppies and kittens drowned in freezing rivers.

But for many more, the RSPCA

will be the difference between life and death.

Their inspectors, volunteers and staff will take in abandoned cats and dogs. They will care for neglected horses and sheep.

They will treat the sick and feed the starving. They will rescue the beaten and the abused.

The RSPCA receives no support from the Government.

It relies on yours.

£12 helps an RSPCA inspector to answer one call.

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And post it early. For Christmas.

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Please use my donation to fight animal cruelty. ☐

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I wish to give via Visa/Access/RSPCA Mastercard no:

Signature Expiry

Name

Address

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To: RSPCA, Dept. TT1B, Freepost, Bristol BS3 3YY.

RSPCA REG. CHARITY 20090



KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE
CHESS CORRESPONDENT

PCA Qualifier

AFTER two rounds of the PCA World Championship Qualifier in Groningen, Holland just three players have a 100% score namely Evgeny Bareev (Russia), Alexander Beliavsky (Ukraine) and Alexei Shirov (Latvia). Britain's Michael Adams as well as pre-tournament favourite Vishy Anand (India) are both hot on their heels with 1.5 points. Former British champion Julian Hodgson recovered well from his loss in the first round to move into the middle of the field with a win against Zsuzsa Polgar.

Important results from the second round were: Alexei Shirov beat Zurab Azamiapashvili (Georgia); Evgeny Bareev beat Predrag Nikolic (Bosnia); Alexander Beliavsky beat Dutch Grandmaster Jeroen Piket and Michael Adams beat Vladimir Akopian from Armenia.

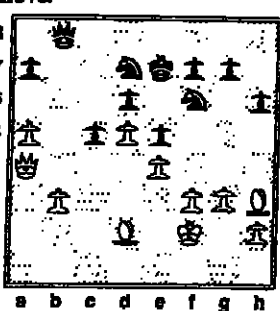
White: Julian Hodgson
Black: Zsuzsa Polgar
PCA Qualifier, Groningen

English Opening

- 1 c4
- 2 Nc3
- 3 Nf3
- 4 g3
- 5 Qc2
- 6 Bg2
- 7 0-0
- 8 Bb1
- 9 b4
- 10 d4
- 11 dxe5
- 12 Qb3
- 13 Rf1
- 14 Ng5
- 15 Bxg5
- 16 Qa3

- 17 Rbc1
- 18 Bc3
- 19 Bcd4
- 20 Nd5
- 21 Ne7+
- 22 Bxb7
- 23 Bxa8
- 24 Qc6
- 25 Rf7
- 26 Rc8
- 27 Nxc8
- 28 Qa8
- 29 Qa7

Michael Adams scored a fine win by keeping Akopian's counterplay under control. White: Michael Adams Black: Vladimir Akopian PCA Qualifier, Groningen Diagram after Black's 42nd move.



- 43 a6
- 44 Qxc4
- 45 Bc3
- 46 Bf1
- 47 Ke2
- 48 Ke1
- 49 b4
- 50 Kf2
- 51 fxe4
- 52 Kf3
- 43 a6
- 44 Qxc4
- 45 Bc3
- 46 Bf1
- 47 Ke2
- 48 Ke1
- 49 b4
- 50 Kf2
- 51 fxe4
- 52 Kf3

Top pairings for round three are: Bareev - Shirov, Kramnik (Russia) - Beliavsky, Romanishin (Ukraine) - Anand and Georgiev (Bulgaria) - Adams.

Winning Move, page 32

WHEN CRUELTY TAKES A HOLIDAY, SO WILL WE.

Last victim of Hillsborough 'died from crush injuries'

By PAUL WILKINSON

TONY Bland, the 96th victim of the Hillsborough football stadium disaster, died accidentally as a direct result of the injuries he received when he was crushed in the crowd, a coroner ruled yesterday.

Mr Bland, 22, died last March after doctors fought a lengthy court battle for permission to withdraw his medical treatment. They believed he had no chance of recovering from the vegetative state into which he had lapsed soon after his brain was starved of oxygen at the FA Cup semi-final on April 15, 1989.

James Turnbull, the West Yorkshire coroner, told Mr Bland's parents, Allan and Barbara Bland, that "they will be able to start the new year with a new leaf and be able to put all this behind them". He said Allan Bland had "faced this terrible tragedy with dignity and has not allowed emotion to affect his decision".

After the hearing, Mr Bland said: "It was the only verdict there could possibly be."

Earlier, the coroner had refused an application to cross-examine witnesses by Father James Morrow, a Pro-Life campaigner who is trying to bring murder charges against doctors at Alderley Hospital, Keighley, where Mr Bland died on March 3.

Mr Turnbull said the issues had been fully canvassed to the House of Lords and he was bound by its judgment. The circumstances of the tragedy had also been examined during the other inquests. His duty was to identify the dead person and to discover how, when and where he died.

Jan Lowe, a pathologist, told the inquest at Bradford that Mr Bland had died from kidney disease and bronchial pneumonia due to brain damage which had been caused by

traumatic asphyxia from crushing.

Dr Jim Howe, the consultant who supervised Mr Bland's treatment at Alderley from May 1989, said that he was breathing spontaneously and his eyes were open when he arrived.

However, it was obvious he was already in a vegetative state. "There was never any eye contact, no response to questions or commands, no contact with those around him. He never focused his eyes, and he began to suffer muscular contractions." He could not swallow and had to be fed through a tube.

Dr Howe said that when Mr Bland's chest was crushed, fracturing five ribs, his brain had been starved of oxygen which had caused the death of the cerebral cortex — "that part of the brain which makes us a person and gives us our experiences". He said that all that was left alive was the brain stem, which controlled automatic functions.

For the first few months, Mr Bland had received daily physio and speech therapy, often assisted by his father, but there was no improvement. After four months, Dr Howe has discussed with Mr and Mrs Bland what the future might hold and pointed out that many other countries allowed treatment to be withdrawn and a peaceful death to follow.

He said that experience showed that if there was any recovery, it usually happened in the first three months and there were no recorded cases of it happening after a year.

Dr Howe said that after about six months he took legal advice and was warned that he might be charged unless he had court approval for the withdrawal of treatment.

Soon after, Mr Bland had developed internal complications that required an operation, but the surgeon said it would be futile and was not prepared to do it.

Eventually, the Alderley Hospital Trust went to court to seek formal permission to cease treatment, which was granted in the High Court in November 1992 and subsequently upheld on appeal in the Lords last February.

On February 22, all food and medical aid was stopped. Mr Bland was washed and kept comfortable and died nine days later.



Tony Bland: in a vegetative state



Heavy snowfall in Derbyshire has assured a white Christmas for John Morton, a Buxton farmer, who felled one of his own trees yesterday for his family's celebrations

Bookies halve odds on a white Christmas windfall

By KATE ALDERSON AND GILLIAN BOWDITCH

LADBROKES is offering the shortest odds in a decade for a white Christmas in the capital, while forecasters believe much of Scotland will have snow on December 25 for the first time in 13 years.

The odds of snow falling at noon on Christmas Day on the roof of the London Weather Centre were halved yesterday from 5-1 to 5-2. Paul Austin, a spokesman for Ladbrokes, said: "These are the shortest odds offered in

Christmas week for over ten years. Last year it was 20-1."

The London Weather Centre continued to predict possible snow in eastern areas on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, brought by north and northeasterly winds around an area of low pressure over the North Sea.

Isobel Lang, a forecaster, said yesterday: "There is a strong chance that the east and southeast of the country will have a white Christmas Eve and Day. There is even a 30 per cent chance of London having one. The last time we

had a true white Christmas was in 1970, but this year the prospects for that are good."

Heavy snow is predicted for almost the whole of Scotland on Thursday and is expected to lie. Yesterday, the Highlands and central Scotland had several inches of snow with Inverness the worst affected area. The snow was 3in deep about 20 miles north of Glasgow.

"There has to be a real prospect of a white Christmas for most of Scotland outside of Glasgow and Edinburgh this year," said a spokesman for the Glasgow Met office.

"Christmas morning itself is set to be frosty and clear but we are expecting significant snow on Thursday coming in from the islands and sweeping south to cover most of the country."

Aviemore Ski Centre reported good skiing in the Cairngorms yesterday. A spokeswoman said: "We had heavy snow last night and we had people out on the mountains today."

But Scots betting on a white Christmas could be disappointed even if they are

snowed in this year. Jim McNally, of Ladbrokes in Grangemouth, said: "It has to be snowing on the roof of the London Weather Centre at noon on Christmas Day to be classed as a white Christmas. So even if you're snowed in Fort William, it won't count if it's not snowing in London."

A brief flurry of sleet in London yesterday morning, and slushy hailstones in the Midlands on Monday evening, have increased speculation about snow on Christmas Day. William Hill, which offers a bet on snow falling at

any time during Christmas Day in any of 12 named British cities, reduced the odds on Norwich from 3-1 to 5-2, then later to 2-1.

A local punter who caught the odds at 5-2 bet £400, which would net a £1,000 profit. The other cities remained at 3-1.

AA Roadwatch said yesterday that vehicle drivers should not expect quieter roads this holiday despite the announcement by the Government on Monday that cones would be removed from roads.

"The last thing people should be thinking is that roads are going to be less congested," said an AA spokesman. "There are 25 major sets of roadworks and we calculate that is an increase on last year. If we get snow and bad weather, the roads are going to be pretty hazardous."

The wintry weather conditions and a high number of accidents on the hills has prompted the Scottish Mountain Safety Group to publish two leaflets advising mountaineers on how to prevent an avalanche and what to do if caught in one.

Forecast, page 16
Snow reports, page 30

Skiers look forward to peak piste conditions

By HARVEY ELLIOTT
TRAVEL CORRESPONDENT

UP TO 30,000 British skiers will head for the mountains of Europe next weekend and indications are that they will find almost perfect conditions. After two days of unseasonably high temperatures and "extreme danger" of avalanche, the Alps are once again being covered with a deep coat of snow and temperatures are plunging well below zero.

David Hearn, of the Ski Club of Great Britain, said: "Last weekend, conditions were fantastic with a lot of snow throughout the main Alpine region. Then on Sunday evening the

temperature rose, reaching as high as 9C in Val d'Isère and bringing serious dangers of avalanche throughout the Alps. The conditions lasted for two days and some people were getting very worried. Now, there is a lot of new snow with more forecast for the rest of the week."

It has been snowing almost continually in the Alps since early November and most resorts have a good snow base. The warm temperatures of the last few days, however, led to rain below 1,000 metres. In Switzerland, Gstaad, which is 1,000 metres above sea level, has between 10cm and 30cm, and Verbier, which is at 1,500 metres, has between 50cm and

160cm. Rain was still falling yesterday in much of the Bernese Oberland but forecasters were confident that this would turn to snow.

At Ellmau in the Austrian Tyrol, which has skiing up to 1,800 metres, there is 20cm on the lower slopes and 60cm on the upper. At Oberurgel, also in Tyrol, where the town itself is at 2,000 metres with skiing up to 3,000 metres, the snow was almost universally 1m deep.

In the US, conditions are as good as they have ever been, while in Scotland the renewed snow falls have provided good conditions on the upper slopes and forecasters predict much improved conditions on the

lower slopes by Christmas. About 600,000 Britons go skiing each winter with most heading for the Alps. The busiest week is always the one after Christmas. Many tour operators this year have been fully booked since the autumn.

Christmas in Austria is popular this year but many more are expected to leave for France, especially the high altitude resorts in the Tarentaise, for the new year. January, which was traditionally unpopular because of the cold, is becoming increasingly popular because it has produced some of the best snowfalls over the last few years. This year looks as though it will be no exception.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince wins libel award

The Saudi Arabian ambassador in Washington won "substantial" agreed libel damages in the High Court yesterday for a false allegation in *The Guardian* that he made secret £7 million payments to the Conservative Party just before last year's general election.

Prince Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdul Aziz is to give the undisclosed sum to charity, *Guardian* newspapers, the editor Peter Preston and Paul Brown, a journalist, accepted the report was untrue and apologised.

Surgery cash

The family of Elizabeth Wigfield, 48, of East Molesey, Surrey, who died after brain damage during routine surgery, were awarded £197,000 in the High Court. The anaesthetist admitted liability.

Abuser jailed

Shaun Gordon, 22, was jailed for four years at Teesside Crown Court for sexually assaulting three young brothers for four days while acting as a babysitter.

Drug stabbing

A boy aged 15 wearing a bullet-proof vest survived a Manchester multiple stabbing believed to be related to drug trafficking. He has had surgery for a throat wound.

Actor's money

Nedjet Salih, formerly of the BBC soap *EastEnders*, accepted undisclosed High Court libel damages for articles in *The Sun* and *The News of the World* falsely accusing him of being a deceitful womaniser.

Tree route

Shoppers from Norway are buying plastic Christmas trees at stores in Gateshead.

Minister rejects nurses' claims

By JEREMY LAURANCE

A HEALTH minister was in conflict with senior nurses yesterday over claims that the NHS faced a "recruitment crisis" which could threaten patient care.

The Royal College of Nursing told Baroness Cumberlege, the junior health minister, that a fall of a third in the number of young people entering nursing since 1983 meant qualified nurses had less help on the wards. A further 20 per cent cut in nursing students was expected next year under Government plans. By 1997-98, there would be 40,000 students compared with the 1983 total of 87,500, the college said.

However, Lady Cumberlege accused the college of changing its tune. Earlier this year, it criticised the health department for training nurses for the role queue. She said: "Within the space of eight months we have, according to the RCN, moved from 'No jobs for nurses' to 'No nurses for jobs'." She said the reduction in places reflected "improved retention rates" among nurses. The recession had

reduced the opportunities for nurses to leave the profession, which in the past had a high turnover.

The college claimed almost every nurse who qualified was needed by the NHS but hospitals could not afford to fill vacancies. They instead hired temporary agency nurses to provide cover, saving on sickness and holiday pay. There was now a shortage of agency nurses, especially in London.

The college gave a warning that there would not be enough nurses to fill the available post when the economy improved and more nurses started to leave for other jobs. A recent college survey of staff morale found a quarter said they would leave if they could find another job.

Tom Bolger, RCN director of education, said: "Nursing students are the future life-blood of nursing. The RCN's research shows they are an ever decreasing proportion of the total nursing workforce. The Government's proposals for a further cut next year seem to show no understanding of workforce planning."

Allergy girl killed by nuts in pie

A FATHER called for clearer food labelling yesterday after an inquest was told his daughter, who suffered from asthma and was allergic to peanuts, died after eating a lemon meringue pie she did not know contained the nuts.

The Hampshire coroner recorded a verdict of death by misadventure on Sarah Reading, 17, a hairdresser from Ash, who bought the pie in Guildford, Surrey, in October.

The coroner, Andrew Bradley, said: "I would like to see the whole question of the problem of peanut allergies publicised." David Reading said: "Maybe there should even be legislation to ensure the ingredients are listed."

Sarah's stepmother, Sylvia Reading, told the inquest at Aldershot that Sarah had called for help, saying she could not breathe.

She had lost consciousness and Mrs Reading called an ambulance that took her to hospital in Aldershot, but staff were unable to revive her.

The cause of death was given as acute broncho spasm and anaphylactic shock caused by a reaction to ingested peanuts.

Inquest halted on knifed schoolboy

By RICHARD DUCE

A CORONER halted an inquest yesterday into the killing of a black schoolboy after a lawyer told him that three new murder suspects had been identified.

Michael Mansfield QC, representing the family of Stephen Lawrence, 18, said he had unearthed "dramatic" new evidence. Stephen, an A-level student, was stabbed at a bus stop in Eltham, southeast



Stephen Lawrence: stabbed at bus stop

London, eight months ago, allegedly in a racist attack. Two boys aged 16 and 17 were charged with murdering Stephen, from Plumstead, but were released after the Crown Prosecution Service decided there was a lack of evidence.

Mr Mansfield said Stephen's parents would pursue a private prosecution unless police investigated the new evidence, which concerned someone known to one of the alleged attackers, witnesses to the murder and the disappearance of another person.

He also said there was information about a statement made by one suspect. "Three more individuals have been identified." One lead had come from Greenwich Borough Council.

Sir Montague Levine, the coroner, agreed that the inquest at Southwark should be adjourned to a date to be fixed rather than jeopardise a possible criminal trial.

About 2,500 people have been interviewed in the murder investigation, which has involved 1,000 lines of enquiry.

Rockers roll up for Top 10 poll

By A STAFF REPORTER

MORE than 2,000 readers tried to guess which rock albums had been ranked as the best 10 of all time by a *Times* panel of experts.

The winner will be announced in tomorrow's paper, but it can be disclosed that only a handful of entries shared the judges' opinion that *The Beach Boys' 1966 Pet Sounds* deserved the crown. Many more preferred *The Beatles' Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, the judges' second choice.

Not surprisingly, there was little consensus among so many entries. The difficulty of dividing the panel's 10 favourite records, let alone ranking them in the correct order, was underlined when David Sinclair, rock critic of *The Times* and part of the panel, disagreed with the final round-up. He particularly objected to the high placing of *Sgt Pepper*, "a knee-jerk vote".

Most readers disagreed and, knee-jerk or not, *Sgt Pepper* featured more often than any other album in the entries. Other Beatles hits, as well as albums by Bob Dylan,

Jimmi Hendrix, Van Morrison and The Beach Boys, appeared regularly on competitors' lists. The Rolling Stones, Meatloaf, Simon & Garfunkel and Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells* also appeared frequently in readers' Top 10s, though not the judges'.

There were rare sightings of Black Sabbath, Deep Purple and T. Rex, and although the competition organisers had warned that there were no albums by Dire Straits, Simply Red, Phil Collins or Genesis among their favourite hundred records, this did not deter some readers from including these bands in their Top 10. A Belfast entry voted for the soundtrack of *The Sound of Music*.

The most exotically postmarked entry was from Oman, sent in by George de Albuquerque, manager of Inchcape Shipping Services in the Sultanate (a *Sgt Pepper* man).

The winner will receive copies of the 100 Best Albums Of All Time listed over the past month in *The Times Magazine*.

Thames comes clean to help salmon reach a record year

By MICHAEL HORNSBY
COUNTRYSIDE CORRESPONDENT

SALMON have returned to the Thames in record numbers this year, helped by less polluted water and fish passes built into many of the weirs that span the river.

The National Rivers Authority (NRA) said yesterday that it had counted 338 adult salmon running upstream to spawn in the freshwater upper reaches. The previous record was set in 1988, when 323 were counted. The run lasts from early June to December. Salmon

began appearing again in the Thames in the early 1970s after an absence of 150 years. By 1979, water quality in the tideway was good enough to enable the fish to migrate through the Pool of London.

The fish, which spend up to three years at sea before coming home, have been aided in recent years by a series of weir passes, consisting of shallow, sloping channels fitted with baffles that slow the speed of the water. Without them, most weirs would be impassable.

The Thames Salmon Trust charity was set up seven years ago to find

commercial sponsorship for the installation of 22 passes, of which 14 are now in place. Three were opened this year, at Sonning in Oxfordshire, Boveney in Buckinghamshire, and Old Windsor and Hurley in Berkshire.

The encouraging news from the Thames is marred by a dispute between the agriculture ministry and wildlife bodies over a decision to allow the culling of goosanders and cormorants on the Wye on the Welsh border to protect salmon stocks. Anglers blame the birds, which prey on young salmon as

well as other fish, for dwindling catches. Last season's catch of 2,000 salmon was the lowest recorded on the river. In 1982, the catch reached a peak of 6,000 and averaged 3,500 a year throughout the 1980s.

The agriculture ministry has granted a licence to 14 people to shoot 42 goosanders and 84 cormorants between the beginning of February and the end of April next year on a stretch of the Wye either side of Hereford. This was against the advice of the NRA and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). Stephanie Tyler, the

RSPB's conservation officer in Newtown, Powys, said: "We do not think the ministry has in any way met its legal obligation to show that the birds are causing serious damage to fish stocks. A cull of 42 goosanders is very high when there are only 300 breeding pairs in the whole of Wales."

Warwick Ayton, the NRA's regional fisheries officer for Wales, said: "We cannot see any justification for the cull. Salmon catches are influenced by many factors, such as temperature changes in the North Atlantic and acid rain pollution."

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Transatlantic rifts on Bosnia and Ireland mark decline in ties since Reagan-Thatcher zenith

Special relationship struggles to bridge the generation gap

By MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON AND MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

THE Anglo-American "special relationship" is "in tatters", according to *The Washington Times*. That was unquestionably an exaggeration, but just how damaged relations were by the Conservative help for President Bush in last year's presidential campaign has been notoriously hard to fathom.

It is in neither side's interest publicly to expose the strains. John Major is not eager to dwell on the fact that his party aides actively worked to prevent President Clinton winning office. Mr Clinton, whose weakest suit has been his conduct of foreign policy, does not want to appear at odds with America's closest ally. Officials on both sides have therefore retreated behind a bland public insistence that all is rosy, which is also an exaggeration.

The sweep of Anglo-American relations is vast, and the potential for disagreement constant. Generally, quarrels are isolated from the overall state of relations: even at the zenith of relations during the Thatcher-Reagan years, there

were sharp disagreements on civil aviation, American legislation on multinationals, the European gas pipeline from Russia and America's invasion of Grenada.

General relations between London and Washington are not as warm as they were a decade ago. Analysts attribute the cooling to the change of generations in the White House, the lack of experience in the incoming Clinton Administration, the suspicion and long memories of middle-level officials who worked for the Clinton campaign, and a general refusal in Washington to focus on foreign affairs.

The Administration's relations with Britain are certainly no worse than those with the rest of Europe, but there remain a number of potential irritants. The main ones are:

□ **Bosnia:** This is still the most fraught foreign policy issue, with considerable potential for disagreement. However, differences are less acute than a year ago, when America was urging European acceptance of Mr Clinton's proposals to lift the arms

embargo on the Muslims and inflict air strikes on the Serbs. The American imbrolios in Somalia and Haiti have radically changed opinion in Congress and in the country, and the Administration would have no support now for military intervention. However, this does not reduce resentment in Washington at the earlier lack of European backing. Madeleine Albright, the American ambassador to the United Nations, recently chastised Sir David Hannay, her British counterpart, for not supporting a US declaration on Bosnia in the Security Council.

□ **Ireland:** There was open alarm in Britain at Mr Clinton's campaign proposals to appoint a peace mediator for Ireland, and the Government made very plain its dislike of such an idea. The Clinton Administration has, at some expense to its own credibility with Irish groups, quietly shelved the matter. Ireland is seen as a touchstone of relations. "You can be sure that if you start to hear talk of reviving a US peace mission, then overall relations with Britain are in trouble," an American source said.

□ **Thorp:** There is growing opposition in Congress, particularly among the Democrats, to Britain's nuclear reprocessing plant at Windscale because of worries over the production of plutonium and the dangers of its theft and possible use in the making of nuclear weapons.

□ **Nuclear testing:** Mr Clinton extended the moratorium on US and British nuclear testing in Nevada despite London's arguments.

□ **Trade:** Mr Clinton has consistently focused on domestic rather than foreign policy, and his determination



Baronsess Thatcher and Ronald Reagan enjoying good relations in 1988

to fight harder for America's economic interests abroad in the post-Cold War era has caused rifts with Europe.

□ **Civil aviation:** The quarrel between Britain and America over landing rights and British stakes in American airlines is more acute than for many years, and American sources said they feared an air war this coming spring.

□ **United Nations:** Personal relations between Sir David

Hannay and Mrs Albright are poor, and co-operation between Britain and the US in the Security Council has consequently suffered.

□ **Nato:** Washington was alarmed by European support for extending Nato membership to Eastern Europe, though this was not supported by Britain.

On the positive side, London and Washington have worked closely on the

formulation of Western policy towards Russia, the future of Nato and ways of completing the Uruguay Round of Gatt. One American diplomat remarked: "On almost all issues, Britain and the US are on the same side of the table. You cannot say that for other important allies such as France, Germany or Japan."

Summit plans, page 1
Leading article, page 13

Old pals' act gives way to cooler realism

WHEN John Major and Bill Clinton met last February at the White House for their first, and so far only, lengthy discussion, they afterwards highlighted each other's political skills when talking to advisers.

Mr Major described the President, admirably, as a "real politician", while Mr Clinton was impressed by the astuteness of the Prime Minister's answers on Northern Ireland. They have met again once, briefly at the Tokyo summit in July, and they talk regularly on the telephone. They get on well at a working level and this is underpinned by good day-to-day relations between their diplomats.

But there is none of the ostentatious closeness of their predecessors. It is not a "Ron and Margaret" relationship. That is only partly due to the lingering resentment of some White House staff at the clumsy role of two officials of Conservative Central Office in advising the Bush campaign. More important has been a divergence of interests between the two countries.

Interest, not emotion or personal relations, has always been the key. Common threats accounted for the original close ties in the 1940s and for the subsequent anti-Soviet alliance. Similarly, no amount of personal friendship has mattered when interests have differed, as during the Suez crisis of 1956. The wartime correspondence between Churchill and Roosevelt shows increasing strains over strategy from 1943 onwards. Even Baronsess Thatcher had her wobbly moments with President Reagan over his more utopian ideas for nuclear disarmament. The Cold War bound the two countries' leaders together.

That has changed. Mr Clinton and his advisers are of a younger generation. For

all the many Rhodes scholars in the Administration, their time at Oxford made them critical of Britain's weakness rather than sentimental about its traditions, and more interested in the opinions of Bonn than London.

But the collapse of the Soviet empire has made many Americans question their involvement in Europe. Warren Christopher, the Secretary of State, has talked of shifting the focus away from Europe. The Clinton Administration has been emphasising links across the Pacific, notably at the Seattle summit last month, and with Latin America.

The Americans dislike being treated by the Europeans as an insurance policy, to be ignored when times are

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

good and only valued when there is a threat. Nonetheless, Nato, rather than the Western European Union, remains the only viable security body. But its role, and relations with Eastern European countries, remains in flux, as will be discussed at the heads of government summit in Brussels next month. This will be Mr Clinton's first visit to Europe as President.

These changes have undermined the previous shared assumptions of the Atlantic alliance. The balance has shifted from defence and security matters to trade and economic issues, where broader European differences with America matter more than particular British ties.

The British-American relationship should remain friendly, but more distant than in the past, where the respective leaders are

PETER RIDDELL



Sir Richard Hannay was publicly rebuked by Madeleine Albright over Bosnia at the UN

Yeltsin blames right-wing gains on Russia's disaffected poor

FROM ANNE MCILVOY IN MOSCOW

PRESIDENT Yeltsin yesterday broke his silence on the eclipsing of Russia's democrats in the parliamentary elections ten days ago and said Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the extremist leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, had profited from a protest vote from the country's poor rather than a swing towards neo-Fascism.

During his first public appearance since the vote at the opening of an architectural exhibition, Mr Yeltsin spoke of the need for more housing for low earners in Moscow and added: "Do not forget the poor. There are quite a lot of them in the country."

Mr Yeltsin played down the ideological significance of the strong support for Mr Zhirinovskiy's party nationwide, saying: "It is not a vote for the leader of this party, nor for its programme." The Russian leader is due to make a statement today on his response to the election results.

Yesterday's comments show that he has decided to pursue the interpretation of the far right's success as a cry of pain over economic hardships rather than an expression of latent Russian nationalism. It also demonstrates his estrangement from some radical democrats, particularly Yegor

■ The Russian election is about to take its toll on the Yeltsin Administration. A number of Cabinet ministers and presidential advisers are poised to lose their jobs

Gaidar, the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Reform and leader of the Russia's Choice reform bloc. Mr Gaidar and Anatoli Chubais, the Privatisation Minister, called at the weekend for an anti-Fascist front and a ban on "serious changes in the presidential apparatus, state television, the Security Ministry and law enforcement bodies".

If Mr Yeltsin throws his weight behind the theory that

Mr Zhirinovskiy's success is a protest vote, he is also obliged to take notice of the message and act upon it. It seems likely that a substantial reshuffle of the cabinet and presidential advisers, as well as a change of pace and emphasis in economic policy, will ensue.

The fate of Mr Gaidar, Mr Chubais and Boris Fyodorov, the Finance Minister, three of the most high profile and energetic reformers associated



Vladimir Zhirinovskiy leaving his party headquarters in Moscow yesterday before flying to Austria

with the policy of rouble stabilisation, backed by the International Monetary Fund, will give an indication of the future direction of government. The policy, which has gradually brought the rouble closer to full convertibility, has been undermined by rouble prices continuing to rise despite the good performance of the currency against the dollar.

Mr Yeltsin's comments about the poor are a tacit admission that the attempt to impose rapid restructuring on the moribund economy was too heavy a burden for many people. All the signs are that he will search for a more moderate path, navigated by Viktor Chernomyrdin, the cautious Prime Minister. Even Mr Gaidar has shifted his priority from controlling inflation to boosting production.

□ **End of KGB:** Mr Yeltsin abruptly abolished the former KGB security police yesterday, saying the huge force that Russians had feared for decades was "incapable of being reformed". He issued a decree saying the Security Ministry would be replaced by a federal counter-intelligence service to be headed by Viktor Golushko, the Security Minister.

He said the security forces were slowing down reforms and previous attempts at reorganisation had been mainly cosmetic. (Reuters)

Bosnian capital heavily shelled on eve of Christmas ceasefire

Milosevic waits for election victory

FROM TIM JUDAH IN BELGRADE AND JOEL BRAND IN SARAJEVO

SERBIA'S ruling Socialist Party inched towards election victory yesterday but, with 89 per cent of the vote counted, it had still not achieved a majority in the 250-seat parliament. Party sources were nevertheless confident that they would have that majority when counting in last Sunday's election is completed.

An economist yesterday predicted that inflation for December would be 250,000 per cent. This estimate, by Miodir Jaksic of Belgrade University, underlines the urgency with which the next government will need to tackle the economic disaster that has overtaken the country. Some economists have predicted that inflation and devaluation of the dinar may mean the disappearance of the national currency and its replacement by the Deutschmark.

The United Nations suspended the international airlift to Sarajevo, the

Bosnian capital, yesterday after a transport plane was hit by machinegun fire on Monday. It is understood that flights will be resumed today. The attack was launched from the Serb-held suburb of Ilidza. The aircraft suffered no significant damage and was able to land, unload and return to Zagreb.

The emergency airlift has been a pillar in Sarajevo's survival. Land convoys, while able to deliver far greater quantities of food and medicine, are often delayed, harassed or turned back by rebel Serbs and Croats.

Sniping in the centre of the capital fell off yesterday after days of intense shooting, but shelling of several suburbs increased dramatically as peace talks reopened in Geneva. All three armies in Bosnia have agreed to a Christmas truce, organised by the UN, to start in the early hours of tomorrow.

The sharp increase in shelling suggests, however, that this ceasefire, like dozens of others, will quickly be ignored.

Only the Catholic Croats celebrate Christmas in December. The Orthodox Serbs mark Christmas in early January. The majority Muslim population does not observe the festival.

As the Bosnian Army and Serbs battled on Zuc hill and Mount Trebevic, the UN Children's Fund published its annual report on the state of the world's children. Sarajevo officials believe 1,500 children have been killed and 12,000 wounded since the siege began.

□ **Tokyo:** Japan yesterday recognised the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, which declared its independence last September, the Foreign Ministry said here. (AFP)

Owen interview, page 1

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Economist

Pressure on right wing increases as apartheid parliament prepares to vote itself out of existence

Afrikaners accuse ANC of betrayal over white state

FROM MICHAEL HAMLYN IN JOHANNESBURG

FOUR months of secret talks between the white right-wingers of the Afrikaner Volksfront and the African National Congress ended yesterday in anti-climax as neither would sign a vital deal to continue negotiations.

General Constand Viljoen, the leader of the Volksfront, declared: "We feel betrayed." He blamed people in the government and the ANC "who seem to be ganging up against us". The general added: "The government and the ANC may have dashed the last opportunity of finding a peaceful settlement." An agreement would have allowed talks to continue "to address the Volksfront's demand for an Afrikaner homeland, a *volkstaat*."

An accord would also have established a joint working group to examine the economic viability of a *volkstaat*, and tried to find a logical way to deal with the civil rights of Afrikaners outside the region and blacks within it.

The ANC hopes to reduce to absurdity the notion of a *volkstaat* which, in the words of the proposed agreement,

would reject "racism and failed apartheid policies".

General Viljoen's statement indicated that he believed his movement had been taken for a ride by the ANC. Nelson Mandela, the ANC president, sent him a letter endorsing the agreement before flying off for his Christmas holiday. The talks, led on the ANC's side by Jacob Zuma, the Deputy Secretary-General, were part of what has become a highly pressured negotiations game. As a series of deadlines for agreement came and go, negotiators take two steps forward and one back.

Tripartite talks continued in Cape Town between the government, the ANC and the Freedom Alliance, in which the Volksfront is in coalition with the black conservative leaders of KwaZulu, Bophuthatswana and Ciskei. The negotiations had broken down overnight as the ANC tried to extract statements from alliance leaders committing them to accept the new constitution and fight elections scheduled for April 27.

The alliance will only commit itself to recommend these

items to its leaders, provided a satisfactory outcome is achieved in the negotiations.

The last apartheid parliament is expected to vote itself out of existence today as it approves the interim constitution paving the way for the vote. But if the talks, which were continuing late last night, failed to produce a compromise that can be put before the "sunset parliament" today, MPs may have to be recalled next year to amend the constitution. Any slippage could put the election timetable in jeopardy.

While the ANC and the government are trying to use the parliamentary timetable as a way of putting pressure on the alliance, none of its leaders appears in the least bit bothered, and indeed hope the schedule will be set back.

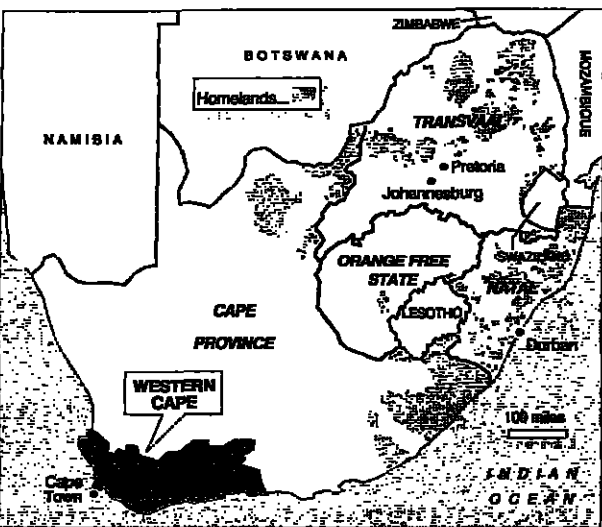
It is also likely that the government and the ANC are trying to drive a wedge between alliance members, who have little in common, save a vague commitment to "self-determination" and an understanding that they have more strength if they negotiate as a body.



Constand Viljoen, the Afrikaner Volksfront leader, and Jacob Zuma, of the ANC, explaining in Johannesburg why no accord was signed yesterday

Coloureds awakening to prospect of power in Western Cape

FROM R. W. JOHNSON IN CAPE TOWN



SUPPORT for the African National Congress is trailing badly behind that for President de Klerk's National Party in the crucial Western Cape region around Cape Town, according to a striking poll conducted for the non-partisan Institute for Multi-Party Democracy: 35.5 per cent of all those polled would vote for the Nationalists and only 28.3 per cent for the ANC/South African Communist Party ticket. Other parties attract a far smaller share of the vote.

With the ANC taking 77.1 per cent of the black vote, although only 3.1 per cent of

white support, the crux lies with the Coloured community, which makes up more than half the area's population. Among Coloureds, the Nationalists, with 45.2 per cent support, are well ahead of the ANC's 17.5 per cent. Coloureds are clearly drawn to the Nationalists by the law and order issue, and they are frightened by the ANC — 28.1 per cent of them say they would be "most afraid" of the ANC if it knew how they voted next April, and 19.3 per cent of them say they would be afraid to criticise the new (presumably ANC-led) government.



Coloureds are the most striking are the poll findings on violence and intimidation. Asked if any political group controlled their area and discouraged support for other parties, more than 40 per cent of Coloureds said they were "most afraid" of the ANC if it knew how they voted next April, and 19.3 per cent of them say they would be afraid to criticise the new (presumably ANC-led) government.

Further, all groups thought it wrong (blacks by only 53 per cent to 30, but Coloureds by 70 per cent to 11) that other parties were not allowed to seek support in such areas.

The differences between the communities are illuminated by another question asking to whom people would look for protection if violence started. Coloureds and Asians were even more prone than whites to look to the police (more whites said that they could look only to themselves to protect their families, but only 20 per cent of blacks pointed to the police as the best protection).

poll, and the same is doubtless true across the country, is a gathering mood of *uhuru* (freedom). Thus, for the past three years, polls have consistently shown that blacks feel they are becoming worse off. Now, however, blacks hold such high expectations of the good things an election is supposed to bring, and are feeling such expectant excitement about the approach of elections, that they are beginning to revise their assessment upward.

A majority of every racial group expects race relations to get better after an election — an encouraging finding, partly offset by the fact that a large majority of every group

also expects many whites and considerable numbers of Asians and Coloureds to leave the country in the wake of an election. Even quite a few blacks say they will leave the country.

The new poll will undoubtedly give fresh impetus to those who would like to see a larger measure of home rule for the Western Cape, and it could well trigger a property boom here as whites gravitate to the one securely anti-ANC region. But, while whites already strongly favour a federal solution for the region, Coloureds are only slowly awakening to their new status as the potential ruling group in the area.

Greece revives the European F-word

FROM GEORGE BROCK IN BRUSSELS

■ Athens assumes the presidency of the European Union next month. The Greek government is already at odds with its 11 partners, especially over Macedonia

ONLY weeks after the Maastricht treaty came into force, the Greek government yesterday launched its plans for its turn at the helm of the European Union by suggesting that work on a real federal constitution for Europe should start in the next few months.

Andreas Papandreu's newly elected Socialist government takes the presidency of the EU for the first six months of next year under the system of rotation between each state. Theodore Pangalos, the Deputy Foreign Minister, yesterday suggested that a committee of "personalities possessing political and scientific qualities" spend the first few months of next year designing a truly federal structure with a central government responsible to the European Parliament and national ministers reduced to acting as a senate.

Mr Pangalos, who takes over as chairman of the EU's Foreign Affairs Council on January 1, compared his suggestion, which has also been floated by MEPs and by the French government, to a committee of wise men which laid the foundations for key treaty changes in the 1986 Single European Act. That sequence of events seems unlikely to be repeated in this decade. EU governments are still recovering from the struggles to have Maastricht ratified, to digest its changes and to try concentrating on improving Europe's performance on jobs and growth. A German official

made it clear that he thought an independent committee unnecessary. "I don't think it'll happen," a British official said. Mr Pangalos admitted that he had no idea whether his plan would gather the unanimous support it would need to go ahead.

Greece's main task will be to try to finish the complex and hard-fought talks between the Union and the Austrian, Swedish, Finnish and Norwegian governments negotiating to join in 1995. EU foreign ministers tried to tie down a number of agreements yesterday but made less headway than they had hoped to, and officials admit that there is no chance of meeting the deadline of March 1 for the completion of talks. Rapid enlargement of the EU is backed enthusiastically by Britain and Germany but viewed with particular suspicion by Spain and France. Even the relatively simple formality of asking the four applicants to agree the Maastricht terms for monetary union was disrupted yesterday by a sudden request from Spain for wholesale renegotiation of the treaty's single currency clauses. "It's almost unbelievable," muttered a bewildered and frustrated EU official.

Greece's differences with its 11 partners over the Balkans, particularly Macedonia, have led to blazing rows before the Greek presidency has started. Despite strenuous protests from Athens, six EU states have sent ambassadors to Macedonia, abandoning attempts to find a common Union policy on what to call the fledgling state. Greece has complained that the name of the former Yugoslav republic implies a claim over its northern province of Macedonia.

Leading article, page 13



Pangalos: looking for committee of wise men

EC peak beckons for Brittan

FROM JAMES LANDALE IN BRUSSELS

THE European Commission appointed two vice-presidents yesterday after weeks of squabbling between Jacques Delors' lieutenants. Sir Leon Brittan, the commissioner with the highest profile since the successful conclusion of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, was not chosen, prompting further speculation that he intends to campaign for the Commission presidency when M Delors steps down at the end of next year.

Sir Leon has been at pains to remain outside the potentially damaging fray throughout the Gatt negotiations. The Commission has had no vice-presidents since November 1 when the

Maastricht treaty came into force and cut the number of commissioners at vice-president level from six to two. Bitter political fighting ensued within the executive body of the European Community.

Manuel Marín, the Spanish Commissioner for Co-operation and Development, and Henning Christophersen, the Danish Economic Affairs Commissioner, have been appointed, securing £11.773 salary increases with the broadly ceremonial posts. With basic tax-free annual salaries of £134,264, most commissioners do not need to worry about such a rise, but the status of those who sit next to M Delors is highly valued. The importance put on the positions is also an indication that M Delors intends to stay on for the full period of office.

Corruption enquiry calls Bossi

Rome: The political future of Umberto Bossi, the Lombardy League Leader, was thrown into question yesterday after he was formally placed under investigation on suspicion of soliciting illegal contributions for his devolutionist movement (John Phillips writes).

Signor Bossi, 51, was questioned by Judge Antonio Di Pietro, who is heading the country's anti-corruption investigation. Signor Bossi is suspected of encouraging the Montedison chemical company to provide a 200 million lire (£80,000) donation that Alessandro Patelli, the umbrella Northern League's former treasurer, admitted accepting.

Judicial sources said investigators suspect that the Montedison payment was the tip of an iceberg.

Leader chosen

Budapest: Hungary's parliament elected Peter Boross, 65, the Interior Minister, as Prime Minister, succeeding the late József Antall. Dr Boross wants to continue Antall's policy of building the country into a market democracy. (Reuters)

Korea changes

Seoul: President Kim Young Sam has replaced more than half his Cabinet. A spokesman said the move was designed to improve South Korea's competitiveness in trade but the Opposition said it reinforced presidential power. (AFP)

Frozen assets

Vancouver: Police in Vancouver and Hong Kong seized \$4.4 million in assets and issued a warrant for the arrest of Lee Chau Ping, known as the "Ice Queen" in the drugs trade, where amphetamine is called "ice". (AP)

Missing lynx

Dubai: A hunter who shot dead a rare lynx in the United Arab Emirates has agreed to try to find its mate to start a captive breeding programme. The hunter killed the animal because it was preying on goats. (Reuters)

After 62 years, Mr Morris thought he'd seen everything.

Like most people in, or approaching retirement, Mr Morris thought he'd pretty much seen it all.

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Aides deny Clinton bid to kill off sex stories

Claims are snowballing of rampant adultery by Bill Clinton. A US newspaper has published information on phone calls by him to one of his alleged partners

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

THE White House yesterday sought desperately to stifle the media's rapidly growing interest in President Clinton's alleged rampant adultery when he was Governor of Arkansas, but the story was fuelled by fresh evidence and an official admission that he had sought to prevent the allegations being published.

The four state troopers from Mr Clinton's gubernatorial security team who made the allegations on Monday claim that they were intimidated, threatened and offered promises of promotion by him or his surrogates in return for their silence.

The White House confirmed that over the past two months Mr Clinton telephoned various people in Arkansas, including members of his old security team, about the allegations. However, it firmly denied he was trying to silence the troopers through improper pressure or inducements.

Officials said Mr Clinton had been informed by Buddy Young, the former head of his security squad, that the troopers were being offered "large sums of money" for stories about the President. Mr Clinton had made the calls to find out "what was going on, whether these guys had gone through with it, whether there was money being offered, how much — the normal things that anyone would be interested in finding out".

The allegations in Monday's conservative *American Spectator* magazine surfaced just as Mr Clinton had begun soaring in the polls. A *Washington Post* survey yesterday gave him a near-record 58 per cent approval rating but White House hopes that the allegations would be dismissed by the rest of the mainstream media were quickly dashed.

The *New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and CBS television largely ignored the

story. However, the highly detailed and colourful tales of Mr Clinton's alleged affairs with numerous women and the First Couple's private rows and vulgarities were splashed across the front of the tabloids, repeated on ABC and NBC television, and warranted full-page coverage in *The Washington Post* and *Los Angeles Times*.

The latter's coverage was the most damaging as the newspaper could not be dismissed as a hostile publication. It had also been investigating the troopers' allegations, and had obtained affidavits from Larry Patterson and Roger Perry, the two troopers who spoke on the record, to buttress their charges.

The *Los Angeles Times* article not only reiterated most of the allegations in the *American Spectator*, but found some evidence to corroborate them. It reviewed partial records of telephone calls Mr Clinton made at the state's expense and found that between 1989 and 1991 he made at least 59 calls to one of his alleged partners, including 11 on a single day and a 94-minute call made at 1.23am from a Virginia hotel. Challenged about those calls, Bernard Nussbaum, the White House counsel, replied that "this President calls lots of people".

Apart from Jennifer Flowers, the nightclub singer, who claimed during last year's election campaign to have been Mr Clinton's lover, the papers have not named the women with whom he allegedly had affairs. However, the *Los Angeles Times* did approach four of them. One did not reply. Another initially denied knowing Mr Clinton, then admitted she did but denied any "improper relationship". A third flatly denied any romantic involvement, adding: "It is infuriating to me that someone is obviously being paid a lot of money to tell you a lie."

The White House press corps has not yet dared challenge Mr Clinton himself about the allegations. White House officials have flatly rejected the charge that the President tried to silence the troopers, but have stopped short of an outright denial of the substance of their allegations. Dee Dee Myers, Mr Clinton's spokeswoman, yesterday tried the new tack of insisting that the President "has said all he's going to say about it". Hillary Clinton said that the stories were being spread for "political and financial reasons".

Clinton supporters are meanwhile pointing out that the troopers hope to write a book about their claims to have facilitated Mr Clinton's sexual encounters.

Hillary's denial, page 1



Hillary Clinton: stories "politically motivated"

Trumps host cream of 'Nescafé society'

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

BILLED as New York's "royal wedding", Donald Trump, the property tycoon, married his long-time mistress, Maria Maples, at a glitzy ceremony in a hotel ballroom that would have made any self-respecting member of the House of Windsor beat a hasty retreat to the country.

The 1,000 guests at Mr Trump's Plaza Hotel on Monday night included the cream of what *The New York Times* described, in the words of Noel Coward, as "Nescafé society".

Among those present were Adnan Khashoggi, the Saudi wheeler-dealer, who once claimed to be the "richest man in the world"; Christie Hefner, the editor of *Playboy*; Silvio Maccioni, the owner of the Upper East Side watering hole, Le Cirque; Ian Schrager, the former Studio 54 boss; and Bianca Jagger. British host of the American television show *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous* and one of the heavy contingent from the media's lower reaches, summed up the prevailing hyperbole. "This is the equivalent of Westminster Abbey tonight," he said. "It's Charles and Diana all over again." He added thoughtfully: "You know what happened with that?"

David Dinkins, New York's outgoing mayor, called the event "Terrific. A number one. Top drawer." But most of the A-list invitees failed to turn up. Absent were Hollywood stars Arnold Schwarzenegger, Liza Minnelli, Wesley Snipes and Whitney Houston as well as leading politicians such as Mario Cuomo, the Governor of New York state, and Rudy Giuliani, New York's mayor-elect. "It's just what I was afraid of," complained Howard Stern, the iconoclastic radio talk-show host. "I'm the biggest name here. I don't see any big stars."

For those wanting to buy presents, the newly-weds registered their wish-lists with three of the world's most expensive jewellers — Tiffany's, Asprey and Cartier.

Mr Stern said he had discovered that friends had six months to buy a present. "They'll probably be divorced by then, so I'm not rushing to get them a gift," he quipped.



Donald Trump and Maria Maples posing yesterday after marrying in New York. They had a baby two months ago

Syria blamed for Beirut bombing

BY CHRISTOPHER WALKER, MIDDLE EAST CORRESPONDENT

A BOMB attack on the Beirut headquarters of the Christian Phalange Party, the worst explosion in the shell-scarred capital for more than two years, has dealt a severe blow to Lebanon's efforts to return to normality after 15 years of civil war.

At least three people, including a two-month-old baby, were killed and 130 others, including 70 Phalange members, wounded. The casualties resulted from the detonation of 500lb in explosives in a lorry parked near the two-storey building during a party meeting. No warning was given and no group has claimed responsibility.

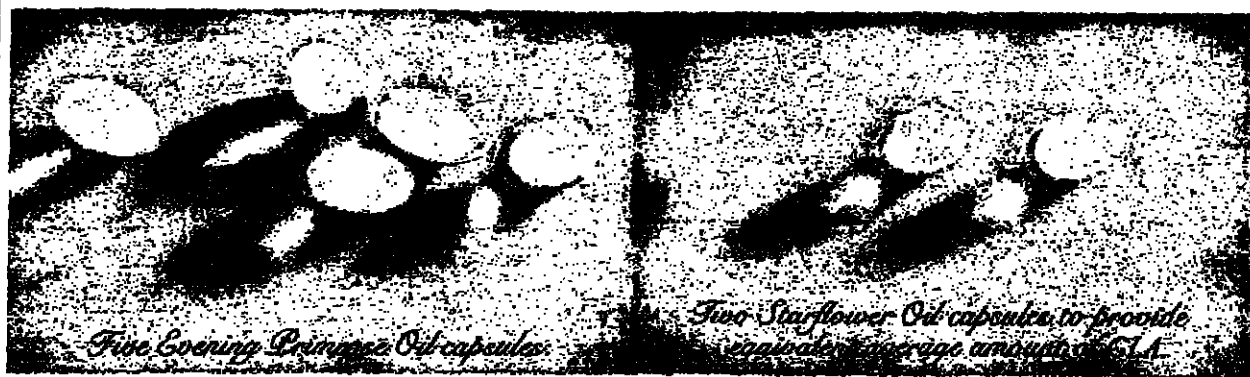
Some Western security experts believe that the attack on Monday bears the hallmarks of Syrian intelligence. The party is opposed to the Da-

masco-backed Lebanese government of Rafik Hariri.

"We thought we had moved from destruction to rebuilding," said *Al-Nahar*, Beirut's main independent newspaper, yesterday. "The government promised that the war had ended. But everything that was said, and everything we thought and believed, evaporated with the... bomb."

Among Lebanese citizens who have been enjoying relative calm since the end of the civil war in 1990, there were fears that the bomb could reawaken sectarian hatreds between Christians and Muslims as well as damaging confidence among Arab and international investors. Arab diplomatic sources said the blast also cast doubt on the visit to Lebanon by the Pope next spring.

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Peking reimposes price controls to curb inflation and head off unrest

FROM JONATHAN MIRSKY, EAST ASIA EDITOR, IN HONG KONG

THE reimposition of price control on basic commodities in China this week symbolises the core problem in the post-Maoist reforms of Deng Xiaoping: the need for China to become "rich and powerful" through the introduction of capitalist techniques but the party's even stronger need to retain absolute control.

Price controls were imposed on 27 commodities including rice, cooking oil, pork, and eggs after controls had been removed last May. Inflation, a nightmare of all Chinese regimes this century and a key factor in the Tiananmen Square uprising of June 1989, reached 30 to 40 per cent on basic foodstuffs in November.

The price impositions came as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development warned that China was caught in a vice: its anti-inflationary measures might bring down growth too far, but relaxing austerity measures might result in greater dangers. In Peking, rumours that inflation would

China has responded to Monday night's BBC documentary on Mao Tse-tung, the late leader, which included comments on his sexual habits by his doctor, by warning Britain that it would be responsible for the consequences, adding: "We will respond... at an appropriate time." The Foreign Ministry said the film had "hurt the feelings of the Chinese people".

soar and that stocks of basic foodstuffs were dwindling had resulted in panic buying. Zhu Rongji, the vice-premier whose directives limiting bank loans and cracking down on corruption and inflation last summer had been superseded by directives for faster growth, has announced that supplies of basic foods will be fed into the markets at controlled prices. The leadership knows that Chinese expect to eat well over the new year in February and resent governments that deny this once-a-year pleasure.

China's farmers are angry that the Dengist reforms, which emphasise market forces, have left them behind. Their incomes average about half those of city people.

During the past year, there have been hundreds of rural riots directed at local officials who pay for state-ordered grain in IOUs that take months to redeem. As a result, farmers have been withholding their grain hoping for genuine higher prices.

Only a few weeks ago, the State Planning Commission issued an eight-point plan for economic and social development next year; its first priority was achieving "an all-round growth in the rural economy and substantial increases in farmers' incomes". This followed announcements from the Central Committee in November of a rapid increase in China's progress towards a market economy, following one of Mr Deng's pithy and

irresistible slogans "only fast growth is socialism".

This appeared to be a direct contradiction of Mr Zhu's summer austerity programme which had brought great swathes of Chinese speculation-based banking and investment to a near halt. Mr Zhu's measures infuriated provincial leaders and the new breed of get-rich-quick entrepreneur so admired by Mr Deng and another catchphrase emerged: "the big bang".

Mr Deng's ultimate priority is party dominance. If enriching east coast investors and regional bosses makes them happy, and pulling on their reins makes them recalcitrant, the party will do whatever is necessary, including relaxing control of loans and printing mountains of new currency. If urban residents grumble at inflation and short supplies, the party will order special trains loaded with food to the main cities, force down the prices, and deal with the peasants later.

Should Ireland's terrorists walk free?

Free them now, says Gerry Adams. Think about it, says Albert Reynolds. String them up, says Ian Paisley. In the Ulster quagmire, little changes.

The Government, confident last week that it was at last on the way to finding an answer to the Irish Question, may have to dig deep into its reserves of pragmatism and cynicism if it is to deal effectively with the problem of IRA and loyalist prisoners in British jails.

Many of those terrorists serving terms in the Maze and Crumlin Road prisons in Northern Ireland, and in jails elsewhere in the UK, are guilty of crimes as heinous as those of, say, Dennis Nilsen or the Yorkshire Ripper.

Who could honestly wish to release those responsible for gunning down off-duty policemen in front of their wives and children? Who could, with equanimity, throw open the cell door for those IRA men who planted bombs in bus stations, restaurants and public houses or burned alive and placed skewers through the ears of captured British soldiers? Who would feel anything other than revulsion

at the freeing of the "Shankill Butchers", who, in the manner of Hitler, used to hang their Catholic victims from piano wire or suspend them from meat hooks?

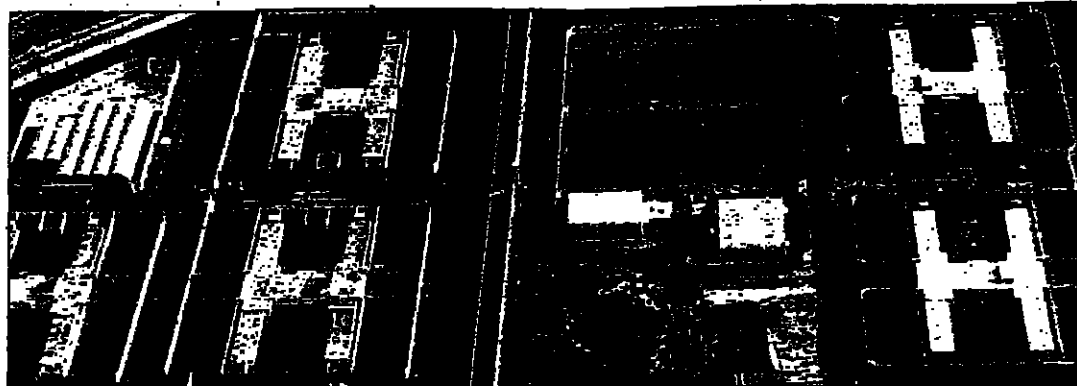
Yet this is the issue on which "peace" in Ulster could ultimately depend. Terrorism has never been simply a security issue. Many of the world's states, with seats in the United Nations, have their roots in insurrection. Britain knows this only too well.

Jomo Kenyatta, founder of the state that bears his name, was a leader of the Mau Mau, whose chief activity in colonial East Africa was murder. Menachem Begin, later to be prime minister of Israel, was a central figure in the Irgun, which in 1947 was responsible for mass slaughter in Jerusalem's King David Hotel.

Archbishop Makarios, later president of Cyprus, had earlier inspired the EOKA gangs in their war against British rule and the pursuit of union with Greece. But the IRA has waged a war against civilians in which innocent people have been massacred.

Do we call these men vile now?

When governments start to talk to gunmen and bombers, too often villains can be turned into "patriots", says Walter Ellis



Inside the H-blocks, IRA killers have thirsted for political status and were given special privileges

We certainly did at the time. They were "scum", often with prices on their heads. Many political leaders who came into conflict with the Empire this century spent years of their lives killing in cold blood. Their followers, hard men who in other circumstances might have been described as thugs,

ended their lives as folk heroes, weighed down with honours. Ireland may appear to follow this pattern. But there are crucial differences. The most telling of which is that the Irish Republic, a nationalist state, codemans their activities. Indeed, the IRA might be said to have pioneered the success-

ful merchandising of murder. Samon de Valera, destined to be Taoiseach and president of the Republic, was an IRA man through and through, who had previously been imprisoned by the British as a threat to good order. He believed passionately in political murder, and in the civil war that followed

partition in 1921 even ordered the death of former colleagues for their "betrayal" of the cause. Later, he renounced violence, was elected in America and received holy unction from the Pope.

The point about murdering for your country is that, once you have achieved your aims, the laws become instruments of your devising. What was murder or terror, ends up as "the struggle". Villains turn into heroes. History becomes the story of the winning side.

In Northern Ireland, the problem is that the winning side has not so far been clearly established. Britain continues to hold the ring and, while largely neutral on maintaining the Union, is obliged to uphold the law for as long as it remains the sovereign power.

Should a united Ireland come around, there is little doubt that Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, along with the hunger-striker Bobby Sands and a handful of others, will be added to the pantheon of Republican heroes.

Britain, even with its long experience of imperial withdrawal, finds its hard to stomach the notion that

criminals should be exalted. Yet it has always recognised that some criminals are less criminal than others.

In 1972, following a hunger strike by IRA prisoners, William Whitelaw, then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, granted jailed terrorists, including loyalists, "special category status". This meant they were allowed to wear their own clothes and receive more visits and food parcels than ordinary prisoners. They were given virtual autonomy behind bars.

This situation went on for two years. Realising their folly, the British began to back-track, and in March 1976 fresh regulations were brought in restricting special status to those already sentenced and behind bars.

Today, with peace in the air, Britain is under enormous pressure from Unionists not to give in on the issue of convicted terrorists. At the same time, it is hard to see a peace deal that does not address this central, and deeply symbolic, issue. The men in suits and the men of blood have much to discuss.

A culture shock could do the trick

Sending young tearaways abroad is not new and can work wonders

WHAT a preaching of backbenchers has been stirred up by the revelations about the treatment of young offenders by the Bryn Melyn centre in Wales!

After the arsonist's tour of the Pyrenees, the harpying rose to pressure-cooker levels with the news that a teenage ram-raider is currently completing an 80-day tour of Egypt and Africa, from Tut's tomb to the Masai Mara reserve.

The words "disgraceful" and "aghast" were freely bandied; if I were the ram-raider, I would jump in front of a charging wildebeest rather than come home from now on it'll be bread-and-skilly and some nice mailbags to stich.

I have to say that Bryn Melyn does lack tact: this particular lad is said to have missed two court dates through being halfway up the Zambesi.

Also, they had a royal visit last week, only the royal in question was that notorious holiday-maker, the Duchess of York. Talk about a PR own-goal, I could not make contact with the beleaguered centre's Mr Brendan McNutt yesterday to discuss all this, but he has tried to explain in the past what he is doing: removing the offender from peer-group pressure, providing one-to-one guidance and showing the children a world different from the pointless squalor of their lives.

What does it all remind you of, in its idealism and its hopefulness and potential for pratfalls? I think I have pinned it down: what the Bryn Melyn treatment reminds me of is the Grand Tour. Or the Alpine Reading-Party, or any of those devices by which the tearaway sons of the aristocracy used to be removed from gaming-halls, dried out, and forcibly exposed to European culture under the care of a long-suffering tutor.

Think of Sebastian Flyte in *Brideshead Revisited*, being sent round Europe with Mr Samgrass of All Souls. Think of all those 18th and 19th century lordlings, precursors of Blandford and Bristol, who got packed off on a whistle-stop tour of Italy and Greece.

Wealthy parents have always believed that travel broadens the mind; or at least, forces responses other than the stock, hopeless, cynical ones of troubled adolescence.

So what Mr McNutt is doing is not new. Only the jargon is; and the fact that the subjects are poor. Moreover, they have all been victims of abuse at home, or they wouldn't be Bryn Melyn cases. There is not much power in the argument that sending one

thief to Africa will encourage hundreds of untroubled children to pinch cars in the hope of a holiday. Troubled, unloved, undirected or abused children may turn to crime for excitement and quick profit. Something has got to change their attitude.

The journeys might. Why else do those of us with middle-class aspirations so persistently expose our children to theatres, to good books, to cities, museums, other countries and great buildings? We want to furnish their minds. We know that such mental furniture is a safeguard against violent anarchic emptiness.

PERHAPS children who have never had any of it might benefit from a sudden massive dose. Perhaps the centre's aim is to bring them back in better heart, and then get them to apologise and do the community service, inspired by lions and mountains, dolphins and temples. It might work. I don't know. All I do know is that plain prison costs £500 a week for an adult, more for a child. And that doesn't work either.



LIBBY PURVES



The screechy sound of Vanessa Paradis, left, is scorned by Patricia Kaas, right, an old-fashioned chanteuse. Could she be the first French singer for decades to find fame abroad?



Why French pop doesn't travel

Chill, Jo and his homeboys, rap stars with the requisite bad attitude, were boiling with rage along the usual lines of "crack Aids, the cops, life's a bitch". So, Chill says, they poured their blood into their new album, sweating it out in the studio at... Aix en Provence.

Hold on. Shouldn't that read Brooklyn or South Central LA? Many of the exponents of *le rap français* are excellent artists, but it is tough to hymn the mean streets from the land of cicadas and pastis.

Actually, says Chill, leader of the hugely successful Marseilles group IAM, "*chez nous, ça ressemble vraiment au Bronx*".

The singer's municipal pride (voiced this week in *Best*, the French rock magazine) touches on the sore point of *la crise* which permanently afflicts *le rock français*: the punch and grit just does not survive the elegance of the language of Molière.

No matter how hard *un rocker* works on his version of *le look destroy*, the result is less ghetto than Gaudier. While the common idiom enabled Britain to espouse the rock 'n' roll spirit, France has never managed to sell its version to the world.

The trouble is, they fail to sound American. Johnny Halliday, the Gallic answer to Elvis, rocks on into his 50s, wowing his fans with a new 40-CD collection, the biggest issued in any country, but who

outside France can sing along with *Quelque chose de Tennessee* or his other anthems?

When France sticks to a Latin sound with a world-music flavour, the formula sometimes works — witness Mano Negra, Gypsy Kings and Les Negresses Vertes — but even in France, the local product is seen as a second-class act beside the "Anglo-Saxons".

When it comes to youth, the only stuff that really sells is the Eurovision variety, a genre of unbearable lightness exemplified by the Lolita-like Vanessa Paradis. Last Christmas the big hit was *Dur, Dur d'Etre Bébé*, a rap number sung by the four-year-old Jordi. This season, it is *Je M'Appelle Hélène*, a ditty by the star of a teen soap opera beside whom Kylie Minogue is Ella Fitzgerald.

Now, however, help is at hand from an unlikely figure: Edouard Balladur, the Gaullist prime minister, a man who could certainly never tell his hip from his hop. Pursuing his crusade to preserve Gallic culture, he has decreed that 40 per cent of the output from

Le rock Français is a contradiction in terms, says Charles Bremner



Johnny Halliday's songs are unknown outside France

music stations must be home-grown. The new law has sparked revolt at the rock end of the business, prompting cries of despair from the top three Paris stations, Fun, Skyrock and NRJ.

"It's an iniquitous decision," says Jean-Paul Baudouin, managing director of NRJ. The big stations "will be cut off from their *raison d'être*. If we are ready to defend our new

writer-singers, it must be accepted that Anglo-Saxon music is indispensable to the stability of our audiences."

While the stations howl, the move has pleased local artists, who say they are squeezed out by a plot master-minded by the big record labels. Such a complaint came from one of the hottest purveyors of the hard punk genre, Les Thugs. A group that hails from the

gentle Loire valley, Les Thugs (usually pronounced Teugs) cultivate what they see as a pure French style and inveigh, like President Mitterrand, against American "cultural imperialism".

They have, however, just launched themselves on the world market with an all-English album called *As Happy as Possible*. Here is a sample from their hard-hitting lyrics: "Why always build new frontiers / New Walls between people in this world / When they are all watching now / The same US TV serials... Burn all the flags... We just want to live in peace."

Listening to that, I wonder whether M. Balladur should not have gone the whole hog and outlawed *le rock* altogether. I am only joking, but at least that way, France could be left to focus on what it does so splendidly — producing the lyrical, sensual, clever and worldly songs that have no peer in the Anglo-Saxon world.

A boom is going on in this department at the moment, with a surge of nostalgia for the *chansonniers* of old, from

Piaf through Yves Montand, Juliette Greco, Jacques Brel and Georges Brassens to Leo Ferré, the Sixties poet balladeer who died this year.

Being dead, with the exception of Greco, has only enhanced their careers. Much of *la chanson française* of the past three decades is dismissed by the thinking classes as sentimental and sometimes reactionary and a lot of it is banal and commercial.

It has been decades, however, since a French singer has made it around the world, even in the crooner genre of Julio Iglesias, unless you count Nana Mouskouri, a French-resident Greek.

There is one possible exception on the horizon — Patricia Kaas, a waif-like singer from the patronage of Gérard Depardieu on a typical trash-pop career in the late 1980s. Now 27, she has taken charge of herself, retrained her voice away from the nasal screech of the Paradis school and acquired something of the pathos and guts of the old cabaret tradition.

Kaas is scoffed at by the rock aficionados of France but she sings to sold-out stadiums in Germany and is now being packaged by Sony for the world market. Her lyrics are classy and usually in French, so she may not make it across the Anglo frontier. Nevertheless, she deserves encouragement: she is not a wannabee homegirl from the Bronx.

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هكذا من الأصل

of the day's bag - but the sport

Julia Llewellyn Smith talks to the man and the girl who missed a date with death on flight 103

'The day of the crash is like my birthday — the day I was reborn'

It was December 21, 1988, and in the bar at Heathrow, Terminal Three, Jaswant Basuta was drinking beer with some relatives. As a practising Sikh, he was not supposed to touch alcohol, but his brother-in-law persuaded him that one glass wouldn't hurt.

Mr Basuta was desperate not to miss the 6pm flight home to New York. He had missed several planes in the past and he knew that his wife, Surinder, would never forgive him. Also, the 49-year-old auto mechanic was starting a new job the next morning. If he arrived late he would probably be sacked. Nonetheless, Mr Basuta stayed on in the bar, confident he would be paged when the flight was ready to leave.

Pan Am flight 103 did not page Mr Basuta. Although his two bags were checked on the 747, the duty manager, Christopher Price, decided to fly without him rather than risk a delay. Mr Price reasoned that, as Mr Basuta was returning home, he did not represent a security risk.

At the last moment Mr Basuta said goodbye to his relatives and ran for his boarding gate. But he was too late. He could still see the jumbo jet sitting on the runway, but, despite his pleas, Mr Price turned him away. As he sat in the lounge, deciding what to do next, the aircraft exploded over Lockerbie in Scotland, killing all 259 people on board and 11 on the ground.

Mr Price's decision had made Mr Basuta one of the luckiest men alive. It also made him the obvious suspect for the bombing. He was stopped by police before he could leave the airport and questioned for several hours. Meanwhile, in New York, Mrs Basuta and her two children, Rony, 14, and Jatinder, 18, were huddled together, weeping, having received a call from a travel agency saying he had died.

When Mr Basuta was allowed to call them, he asked a policeman to do it, thinking the sound of his voice would be too much for his wife. At the news, Mrs Basuta

screamed so loudly that the officer had to hold the phone away from his ear.

Dozens of Mr Basuta's British relatives had to be contacted, but reaching them proved difficult because so many of them were telephoning each other. Eventually, the operator agreed to break in on a conversation and Mr Basuta came on the line, to the background noise of shrieks of delight. He left Heathrow at 2am for his father-in-law's house, where the family congregated and talked until dawn broke.

The police questioned Mr Basuta once more, but his innocence was soon apparent and five days afterwards he returned home. Two months later the family arranged a 48-hour prayer ceremony in a Sikh temple to thank God for sparing him and to pray for the souls of the victims.

Five years later, the memories of that night are as vivid as ever to Mr Basuta. "I wish the rest of them could have had the same luck the Almighty gave me," he says. "I consider December 21 like my birthday — it's the day I was reborn."

As is everyone involved in the disaster, Mr Basuta, who still lives in New York, is angry that the bombers have never been brought to justice and is certain that the catastrophe could have been prevented. "When I landed in London in 1988, my relatives said to me 'Why did you come with Pan Am?' There had been warnings in the American press that a Pan Am flight would be blown up, but nothing was done." He is in touch with the people of Lockerbie and has promised to visit the town next time he is in Britain.

The experience has, he says, changed him profoundly. "Everybody believes in God, but this was... If your luck changes like that it does make you go towards the religious side. If you saw me at that time and if you see me now, you would notice the difference. I used to be a very social person, now I am much more quiet."



Saved — Leesa Davies with her mother. "I was walking around and praying after I cancelled her ticket," Mrs Davies says. "People thought I was crazy. I was just so happy"

He feels no guilt that he was spared. "If I had to die I was going to die with them. If I had to go, my name would have been called. I think God said I should do something better in my life — maybe it was to make me realise there is somebody else who is controlling the whole thing and somebody else who runs the show." He has never been compensated for the baggage he lost on the flight.

Leesa Davies's experience was not quite so dramatic, but she was equally lucky. At the time of the bombing she was six years old and had been staying with her grandmother, Melba Johnson, in Coventry. She was booked on flight 103 to return to her mother Rosalee in New York in time for Christmas. The day before she was due to leave, however, she begged to be allowed to stay with her grandmother for a few more days. Mrs Davies cancelled the booking. When the bomb went off, Leesa was attending a carol service in Coventry cathedral.

"I just got the faint feeling, like a chill, when I heard," Mrs Davies says. "I was walking around and

praying. People thought I was crazy. I was just so happy. Even though I knew I had cancelled the flight, I called my mother anyway to say 'Are you sure?' Most of her relatives were calling me to check I hadn't changed my mind about the cancellation."

The disappointment that Leesa would not be home for Christmas quickly turned into joy. "Everyone missed her that year, and felt sad she wasn't around, but it was a nice sadness," her mother says. "I

felt lucky and grateful to God," says Leesa, who will be 12 next month. The family still keep the newspaper clippings from the time and last summer Leesa showed them to her sixth-grade class as part of a class project. "They were surprised, they found it amazing," she says.

She is, her mother says, "a regular girl", of whom she is very proud. "Teachers and religious leaders always say she is so polite, so charming, such a nice young

lady. She's a student monitor, she gets lots of phone calls. She was class champion in the spelling bee contest. She loves reading her Bible and reminds me to read mine." "I like to read, write, draw, talk to my friends," Leesa says.

This Christmas, Leesa will stay with her father's family in Connecticut. Her parents are in the process of divorcing and Mrs Davies, who works in Wall Street as an insurance accountant, may be alone. "I put up a little tree so

Leesa can enjoy it, but it's a lacklustre time for me." Her mother in Coventry died last year and Mrs Davies misses her very much at Christmas.

Leesa has an extra importance in her mother's life, because Mrs Davies, who is West Indian, has no other family in America. She tries not to think that she could have lost her child. "I try to block out the date of the crash. But there are constant reminders — there was something on the news about it just the other day and you get these goose pimples. I can't thank God enough."

Leesa wants to be a lawyer. "I think she may well be," her mother says. "She's articulate, she reads a lot and she has a great sense of justice. And, maybe, there is a reason for all this. Maybe she will represent the underprivileged or the relatives of those who died on that flight. Otherwise, what is the meaning to all this?" It is a question that the families who met in Westminster Abbey last night to commemorate the victims of Flight 103 will ask for a very long time.



Disaster — part of the wreckage of the crashed Pan Am jumbo near Lockerbie in 1988

Why the guns could fall silent



Part of the day's bag — but the sport itself is under fire

Shortly after 9am we gather in the driveway of John Williams's home near Fordingbridge, in Hampshire: eight guns, a dozen or so beaters and three "pickers-up" whose job, helped by some well trained and endearing Labradors, is to gather up the fallen birds. In any well-run shoot the retrieval of all dead and wounded birds is an imperative.

Among the pickers-up is Dr Mike Swan, an adviser to the Game Conservancy, whose offices are just down the road and who knows at least as much about conservation of wildlife and the countryside as any of the environmental groups. "A perfect day for shooting," Dr Swan observes, and so it is, slightly overcast with a cool north-easterly breeze.

Like a general briefing his senior officers, Mr Williams, who runs the shoot on his 450-acre estate, gathers the shooters round him. "You can shoot at any game; there'll probably be a few partridge as well as pheasant. We'll do five drives this morning, then back here for lunch and we'll try the woods in the afternoon."

There are some footpaths, and last week there were several walkers around, so please be careful. The best advice is not to shoot at any bird unless you can see sky behind it."

The shooters nod their agreement. They are mostly old friends, chummy, companionable and unpretentious, members of a syndicate which includes lawyers, a dentist, an anaesthetist at a local hospital, City commuters and farmers. They pay £2,000 for a full eight days' shooting, or in most cases half that for four days. "It's an expensive hobby, but the money all goes to pay

Field sports enthusiasts fear that shooting may be next on the animal rights protest list, says John Young

the keepers and to rear and feed the young birds," Mr Williams points out. "The beaters get £13 a day plus lunch and beer, but they do it mainly because they love it."

In uniform flat caps, green jackets and wellingtons, we set off in three Land-Rovers. The guns have drawn lots for places and disperse to their posts. The beaters move up the hillside, rattling their plastic flags to "blank in" the coverts and drive the birds into a small field of maize where they customarily feed.

"This is all set-aside land, where the EC rules allow us to plant crops as long as they are not for human or animal consumption," Mr Williams explains. "So we plant a mixture of maize and millet, which the birds love, and at the end of the season we just plough it in and replant."

A horn sounds, the beaters move through the maize and the first birds emerge, flying low as reared pheasant do when still relatively tame and unused to the guns. There are a few hits, several misses and some jocular banter. This is not a syndicate which takes itself too seriously.

"Two hundred birds a day would be more than enough," one of the guns, Ian Wallace, a QC and law professor, remarks. "When shooting parties first began in Edwardian times success was measured

by the size of the bag, and there are some shoots today which still take a very commercial view. But it's quite unnecessary."

The horn sounds the end of the drive, and it is back into the vehicles for the four drives left before lunch. More birds whirl out of more maize fields. Good shots are mixed with embarrassing "wallies". It is all high good humour and good fun. Mr Williams commutes to the City during the week and most of the land is let to tenants. He is concerned that those he calls the old country families, with their roots in farming and field sports, are becoming an extinct breed. His gamekeeper, who delights in the name of Peter

Rabbits and is known to all as Bunny, retires in five years' time. "I don't know what I shall do without him."

Over lunch Mr Williams discloses his fears for the sport. "I've not felt confident about the future of shooting for some time," he says. "The Labour government might well have stopped it back in the 1970s. We are under increasing pressure and we are all on the defensive. Farming has become a factory process and townspeople do not understand the ways of the countryside."

"It is difficult to justify killing for pleasure to someone who believes it to be morally

wrong. Much of the opposition to shooting comes from the fact that we enjoy it. We are all friends together and we have a day out and the locals enjoy it too. But for some people that makes it all worse."

As well as the "antis", shooters have to contend with EC legislation which demands that all premises used for raising pheasant chicks and selling eggs are subjected to strict hygiene regulations; that every shot bird intended for sale should be inspected by a veterinary surgeon within one hour; and that there should be a closed season for predators such as crows and magpies.

He believes that few of the "antis" are genuinely concerned about the birds' welfare. Those who have tried to disrupt grouse shoots in the north of England appear simply to dislike human beings whom they see as rich and privileged. "They actually said they didn't give a damn about the birds but they hated rich bastards."

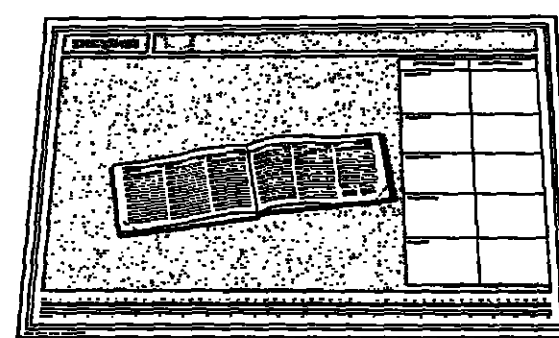
"There is probably less danger to lowland shoots because they attract a bigger mix of people and class distinctions are less obvious. If protesters ran up against a bunch of local farmers they might get more than they bargained for."

As for the Home Secretary's recent announcement that stronger action will be taken against those who try to disrupt country sports, Mr Williams and his fellow shooters are sceptical.

His shoot already suffers from poaching, mainly by local gypsies, and it is difficult to get the police to take any action, he says. He believes that there is no point in passing new laws without some prospect of their being properly enforced.

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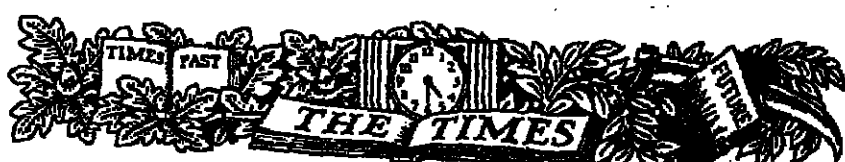
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Playing a
uplicitous
game

re IRA is imposing
erms, says Conon
Cruise O'Brien



ERA OF ESTRANGEMENT

John Major and Bill Clinton have fences to build

This time last year John Major visited President Bush. Bill Clinton, America's president-in-waiting, had other engagements and Whitehall was left to brush aside suggestions that this was a deliberate slight. After taking office, Mr Clinton said that he attached little importance to the Tories' involvement in the Bush electoral campaign, and even to Whitehall's search of the files relating to his Oxford years. Whitehall held its breath.

A year on, Downing Street has explained the absence of a Christmas engagement in Washington from Mr Major's diary by reference to the "recent" meeting between the two men: last July, at the Group of Seven summit in Tokyo. Britain is not on Mr Clinton's itinerary next month, when he makes his first visit to Europe as president: naturally, since he will be here next June, for the 50th anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy.

Crisis, what crisis? There may be none, in the sense that the element of "personal chemistry" between leaders matters less when two countries have well-rooted habits of close contact at official level and share a similar outlook on most, if not all, subjects.

The British Government and the Clinton administration have fallen out, publicly and badly, over Bosnia; but there is broad strategic agreement in Washington and London on Gatt and Nato, the great trade and security questions of 1993. However absurd the French hysteria about an Anglo-Saxon conspiracy to subvert the European Exchange Mechanism and to exert an Anglophone cultural imperialism, the joke about "two great nations divided by a single language" is still only a joke.

Yet Mr Clinton has shown a petulant proclivity to compensate for foreign policy failures by picking bones publicly with America's European allies. Warren Christopher, his secretary of state, dismisses Western Europe's "dominance" as a thing of the past. In October, interviews they gave to *The Washington Post* heralded, for American commentators, an "era of estrangement". In London Lady Thatcher sounded the alarm, saying that, "Whatever is wrong

now between the US and Europe, especially Britain, it must be mended."

At such a juncture in transatlantic affairs, any British prime minister would attach considerable importance to ready access to the White House. It is becoming painfully clear that Mr Major lacks this access. If Mr Clinton has forgiven the Tories' bias towards Mr Bush in the presidential election, the men on his campaign team who now control the White House schedule have not. Harvard University is reader with an invitation for Mr Major than Mr Clinton; and even the transatlantic telephone rings only occasionally.

Diplomatic wheels may suffice to handle such inherently manageable disagreements as air rights. On Ireland, Mr Clinton has proved more cautious than his campaign rhetoric. Overall, US relations with Britain are no worse than they are with Germany on strategic burden-sharing or with France on trade. But sympathetic contacts at the highest level have mattered much in the past in overcoming serious disagreements over Grenada, the European gas pipeline and Jeanne Kirkpatrick's pro-Argentine stance in the Falklands War. They matter now for mending Nato's rusting hinges. But London and Washington are further apart than they have been since Suez.

Post-election uncertainties in Russia should underline, to both sides, the inadmissibility of this state of affairs. A stable, prosperous and peaceful Russia is of absolute importance in the world after the Cold War. The co-operative management of change for this crippled giant is hard to envisage without intensive collaboration between America and Western Europe. If reaching out to Mr Clinton requires a becoming British modesty over Balkan policy — and even if it requires some more explicit apology for meddling in American elections — Mr Major should look kindly on that most traditional of British dishes, humble pie. As for Mr Clinton, he needs some professionals to run his diary — and a secretary of state intent on bringing order to the jumble that passes for America's foreign policy.

ILLIBERAL DEMOCRATS

An honourable and necessary exercise in political honesty

Open government may be in the interests of the governed, but often acts against the interests of those in power. This is well understood by Conservatives, particularly those smarting at Lord Justice Scott's intrusions into their practices. It was understood by Labour governments too; but a long period of opposition has given Labour politicians, at least publicly, more sympathy for the governed than for the government. Now Liberal Democrats, after more than half a century of opposition, have discovered just how painful open government can be.

When accusations of racism were made about leaflets distributed by local Liberal Democrats in Tower Hamlets, Paddy Ashdown did what any leader of a party dedicated to open government ought to do: he set up an enquiry and promised to publish the report. Labour too promises open government; but when its candidate in the Millwall by-election leaked false canvass returns to the press, which helped to publicise the British National Party candidate, nothing was done in public. The party is not prepared to practise what it preaches.

In the sordid world of party politics, Labour's sweeping of such affairs under the carpet may be the wiser course. For there is no doubt that Lord Lester's report on the Liberal Democrats in Tower Hamlets will be damaging to the party. Not only, he says, did local councillors put out leaflets that exploited white residents' resentments of Bangladeshis; but the party leadership, despite having a fair idea of what was going on, failed to take appropriate action.

What emerges even more strongly from Lord Lester's thorough appraisal is the

tension between so-called "pavement politics" and the national game. Liberals have excelled at the former for decades; unlike the other two parties, they specialise in finding out what really bothers local residents, however trivial, and promising to put it right. The result may be only a few more speed humps or a pelican crossing on a dangerous road; but that may well improve people's lives more immediately than any grand statement of ideology.

Because local views are so diverse, Liberals are often accused of being all things to all men. This will necessarily be the case when councillors are addressing in one part of the country the wishes of the comfortable middle classes in Somerset, and in another, those of the deprived and unemployed in Liverpool. But in a party that is founded on a set of principles that include tolerance and social justice, there must be some local demands that a Liberal should refuse to meet.

The Liberal Democrats have practised subsidiarity within their own party to what now looks like a dangerous extent. Earlier intervention could have prevented this embarrassing episode. Mr Ashdown should now act on Lord Lester's recommendations by expelling the councillors concerned and reviewing the procedures that allowed these leaflets to slip through.

In the short run, this whole affair will tar the Liberal Democrats with an image of racism out of proportion to the offence. But in the long run, the centre party should emerge smelling more of honesty than hypocrisy. To see politicians prepared to act on a principle that does not serve their electoral advantage is as refreshing as it is rare.

OUR BALKAN COUSINS

The European Union will soon be in poor hands

Greece has bragged that it is has particular strategic importance in a post-Yito world. In thus labelling its geographical point — that it is the only European Union state in the Balkans — Greece is guilty of inaccuracy. It would be a better formulation of political and cultural verities to say that it is the only Balkan state in the European Union.

On the first day of the new year, this Balkan state will ascend to the presidency of the Union. While this may be cause for rejoicing in Athens, it does not fill the other members with enthusiasm. Nor should it. For Greece is the most badly run of all, a perpetual source of migraine to Brussels and the OECD. Sun, olive oil and yoghurt apart, Greece is the least pleasant European country in which to live. Its rate of inflation is four times the European average and its national debt is 120 per cent of its GDP. It has the largest black economy in Europe, and tax evasion is an art form. The problem, however, is not one of money alone.

In no other European democracy is the level of political debate so impoverished. The last election was a shocking case in point. The Macedonian question seems to have produced a nation-wide impairment of critical faculties and an outbreak of simplistic panhellenism. Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu, in his formal address to the

Chamber of Deputies on taking office, said that a major guideline of his foreign policy would be "to safeguard Hellenism from any attack". In meddling in Albania, by raising unconstructive questions about ethnic Greeks in northern Epirus, Athens is fanning dangerous fires, to say nothing of laying the groundwork for an exodus.

On Monday, seeking to renationalise Athens's buses by force, the government ordered riot police to storm a bus depot. This resulted in one man's death and injury to several others. Recent diplomatic setbacks on Macedonia might have dictated that a domestic show of strength was necessary to keep party ideologues sweet, but the heavy-handedness of method is jarring. So, too, was the induction into the army, to head the general staff, of retired officers faithful to Pasok. This provoked an avalanche of resignations, including the country's entire military command structure. The value of Greece in any security arrangement is unlikely to be great.

In an action typical of a polity where party interest is equated with national interest, Papandreu has postponed the privatisation of OTE, the national telecommunications company, denying his starved economy of over £1 billion in revenue. This is not responsible government.

Time to replace Arts Council?

From Sir John Tooley and Sir John Burch

Sir, The heading to your first leader on December 7 was "The Arts Council needs a new start and fresh vision". Since then, the council has fortunately reneged on its ill-conceived policy for London orchestras, and Sir Peter Hall has called for "an entirely new initiative from the Government both to preserve and to develop our arts" (letter, December 11).

One previous arts minister, Tim Renton, has advocated the abolition of the Arts Council; another, David Mellor, wants a "clear-out" of the Arts Council; and Lord Rees-Mogg dismissed Mr Renton's views because a greater role for government would leave the arts vulnerable to political whim and manipulation (report, December 10). The current situation is no longer tenable. So, what next? There is no agreement.

Tinkering with the Arts Council will not restore its credibility and will continue to expose it to increasing arm-twisting by Whitehall. To abolish it, and make the Department of National Heritage the arbiter of funding, would give excessive power to government, whose creature the arts would increasingly become.

Sir, it is nearly 50 years since the Arts Council was created. It has great achievements to its credit but society has changed: within it, education has changed — a crucially important factor for the arts, yet rarely considered with it due to the limited respective responsibilities of the parent ministries. Despite inadequate funding, the Government professes support for the arts. It should then not allow the present situation to continue. To provide a contemporary, relevant structure and policy requires, we suggest, a royal commission or some other kind of public enquiry.

Its recommendations should lead to the creation of a new body which enjoys the confidence of the arts community and government and is able effectively to cope with current problems, including the distribution of funds from the National Lottery.

The postwar achievements in the arts are immense. Sadly, they are now at risk and, in some instances, eroding. It is the responsibility of government to halt and reverse this trend.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN TOOLEY (General Director,
Royal Opera House, 1970-88),
JOHN BURGH (Director-General,
British Council, 1980-87),
Trinity College, Oxford.
December 20.

From Mr A. F. Lilley

Sir, You ask in your leading article, "Sounds of retreat" (December 16), if "late good sense" might "save" the Arts Council. I ask why on earth should anyone, except perhaps its members, so desire?

Surely this inept and incompetent body should be scrapped instantly, being so obviously unfit to disburse taxpayers' money. It costs millions of pounds a year — there must be a thousand better usages.

I am, Sir, yours sincerely,
A. F. LILLEY,
Kingsdown Park House,
Tankerton, Kent.

On a peaceful note

From Mr Maurice Pitman

Sir, Your issue today surely included enough good news to please Marilyn Lewis of the BBC — the Anglo-Irish and Gatt accords; and even the Arts Council's backing off from its plan to wish a happy Christmas to all the London orchestras, except two, by setting up a super-orchestra, for which support seemed limited to a tiny and silent minority. Let us therefore give thanks to Sir Leonard Hoffmann, who was asked to assess the orchestras' futures, that the debut of this hybrid (presumably to be called the Royal London Philharmonia) has been delayed indefinitely.

Let us also wish longevity to the excellent Philharmonia, LPO and RPO and a happy Christmas to all their sponsors, except one. These and the other UK orchestras would seem fitting beneficiaries of the new peace dividend that Ulster could provide, to enhance the quality of life in the province and elsewhere.

Yours etc,
MAURICE PITMAN,
Whiteland, North End,
Bath, Avon.
December 16.

St Benedict's bush

From Dr John Doherty

Sir, St Benedict founded his first monastery, and thus Western monasticism, not at Monte Cassino but at Subiaco, where he used to lie down on a bramble bush to mortify his flesh ("Is religion a healthy habit?", Body and Mind, December 14).

What effect this had on his health is not known but it worked wonders for the bush, which survived for centuries until St Francis miraculously changed it into a rose tree, which blooms to this day.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN DOHERTY,
Medical Service,
International Atomic Energy Agency,
Wagramstrasse 5,
A-1400 Vienna.
December 16.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

The season to soothe the suffering

From Dr Diana B. Tyson

Sir, The hardest time of the year is upon us again, when the lonely, the ill, the dying, the destitute are made to feel their suffering more keenly; when materialistic one-upmanship reaches ever dizzy heights; when countless people spend money they haven't got on gifts the recipients often neither need nor want; when families which normally rub along tolerably well are driven to (sometimes lasting) family feuds through enforced togetherness; when the Samaritans' phone lines sag under the strain; when a country in serious economic trouble closes down almost totally and vegetates for nearly a fortnight when normal life becomes impossible because virtually all public and private institutions, including public transport, are closed — in short, Christmas.

How many people think but dare not say because that's socially unacceptable: "I'll be glad when it's over?"

How often does the bright "Did you have a nice Christmas?" get an "Oh, quiet, you know", which masks who knows what loneliness or despair which it is, again, socially unacceptable to express?

Why should people be forced into

such false positions? It is time to stop the senseless and insensitive social pressure and to behave rationally — and compassionately. Plenty of people are willing to work over the Christmas period, so that the nation — and individuals — can continue to function.

We can all pay attention, by phone, letter or visit, to the elderly, old or faraway friends, those in trouble; we can, and should, give to charity instead of joining the compulsory gift-giving madness; we can give the children a good time without giving them the impression that the meaning of Christmas is measured in glitz and competitive opulence.

We can allow those unable to have "traditional Christmas celebrations" the possibility of getting on with their lives with dignity and independence; and those of us who are Christians can, and should, in the stillness of our souls, honour the measureless wonder of someone who, all that time ago, was born to save us and prepared to die to wash away our sins.

Yours faithfully,
DIANA B. TYSON,
54 Ridgmont Gardens, WCL,
December 20.

Democratic moves in Hong Kong

From Mr Ian Witherspoon

Sir, At the foreign affairs committee on December 8 (report and Bernard Levin article, December 10), Sir Percy Cradock was at pains to highlight adverse Chinese perceptions of current proposals to reinforce democracy in Hong Kong. He was less than convincing when asked to comment on the views of Hong Kong people.

Those who work in the public sector in Hong Kong believe meaningful implementation of the arrangements for democracy enshrined in the Joint Declaration is essential to the rule of law. These arrangements will help to make Hong Kong a fairer and more open society and ensure that rights and freedoms are sustained.

Far from being dangerous or reckless as Sir Percy suggests, Governor Patten's modest proposals for electoral reform are worth holding out for: they deserve the support of all those, whether in London or Peking, who purport to understand and reflect the aspirations of Hong Kong people.

Yours faithfully,
IAN WITHERSPOON (Secretary),
HM Overseas Civil Service
Association,
31st Floor, Revenue Tower,
5 Gloucester Road,
Wanchai, Hong Kong.

Challenged indeed

From the Registrar of the University of Otago

Sir, We are intrigued to note that John Patten chose to open his *Times* essay (December 6), entitled (earlier editions) "Why degree of quality is essential", with a reference, albeit misinformed, to the University of Otago, in New Zealand. At Otago, says Patten, "courses are being offered to the intellectually challenged". Opening the doors of universities to all and sundry is one way of growing a higher education sector.

While we are delighted to have caught the eye of the Education Secretary from even further away than he thinks — it is, in fact, 13,000 miles from Westminster to the city of Dunedin — we are at a loss to understand the import of his claim. Possibly he is referring to Otago's adherence to a policy of granting a place to those actually qualified to enrol.

The University of Otago adheres rigidly to the entrance standards set and controlled by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. There has never been the slightest suggestion that courses at the University of Otago are "open to all and sundry". Perhaps the minister's

informant has been misled by the use, in informational material, of the phrase "open entry".

In the New Zealand context this is well understood to mean that there are no restrictions on places provided the applicant has attained an entrance qualification. At Otago this policy is applied to general courses — humanities, sciences and commerce — but not to specialised courses such as medicine, pharmacy and dentistry, where admission is competitive and determined according to academic criteria.

While we have no doubt that our courses are intellectually challenging, we have never chosen to use the phrase the minister attributes to us, "intellectually challenged", to describe any of our students.

Our degrees and the quality of our research are well known in the academic world, as the several hundred of our graduates living and working in the United Kingdom will affirm.

Yours etc,
D. W. GILVAN,
Registrar,
University of Otago,
PO Box 56, Dunedin, New Zealand.
December 16.

Running the lottery

From Professor George Teeling Smith

Sir, Lord Young's advocacy for his bid, with Richard Branson, to run the National Lottery as a charity (letter, December 16) may appear superficially convincing, but their proposal has its dangers.

There would be no problem as long as their energy and expertise were available. But subsequently the lottery could fall into the hands of a well-meaning but less competent charitable committee.

Without the management discipline of a profit motive for the organisers, charities and not-for-profit organisations can sometimes become surprisingly inefficient.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE TEELING SMITH,
65 Castelnau, Barnes, SW13,
December 16.

From Mrs S. E. Robertson

Sir, Richard Branson should offer to run the Government, which is at present in charge of our biggest "lottery" (letters, December 16). That way "hundreds of millions of pounds extra would go to good causes" (report, December 14). He would have my vote.

Yours faithfully,
S. E. ROBERTSON,
Larkfield,
English Bicknor, Gloucestershire,
December 16.

Balancing books in film industry

From Mrs Anne Jackel

Sir, Your report (December 14) on the world trade talks cites a French tax on foreign films and a sum of \$380 million raised, in Hollywood's view, to subsidise French cinema.

France could just as well be accused of "subsidising" American movies since many copies of US films distributed in France are financed by the CNC (Centre National de la Cinématographie). It is responsible for raising and collecting the \$380 million mentioned.

Yours faithfully,
ANNE JACKEL,
University of the West
of England, Bristol.
Faculty of Languages
and European Studies,
Coldharbour Lane, Bristol,
December 14.

From Mr Tim Mugford

Sir, Charles Bremner is critical of the French government's 11 per cent ticket tax on the film industry ("Where did French films go wrong?", December 10). I am pleased to say that members of this society have, no doubt as a result of this same tax, benefited recently by seeing those brilliant French films, *Delicatessen*, *Les Amants du Pont Neuf* and *Life and Nothing But*, to mention but three.

It would be nice to feel that such a large proportion of ticket sales in Britain found its way back into film production.

Yours faithfully,
TIM MUGFORD (Chairman,
Stroud and District Film Society),
Stokescroft, Cossack Square,
Nailsworth, Gloucestershire.

From Mr S. P. Hodson Pressinger

Sir, Europe's success in defending her individual culture from the American influence in audio-visual trade owes much to our French partners, whose tenacity was nothing less than heroic. However, apart from cultural considerations, could this success be yet another subtle attempt to forestall English becoming the lingua franca of the European Union?

Yours sincerely,
S. P. HODSON PRESSINGER,
4 Lyall Street, SW1.

From Mr A. P. Pavlin

Sir, Sir Anthony Meyer (letter, December 9) highlights the blatant discrimination against non-Hollywood films practised by most British cinemas. That they are operating against their own commercial interest is indicated by the UK box-office figures for the weekend of December 3-5.

Of the 15 top-grossing films, 12 are American. However, if the takings for each film are divided by the number of screens at which it is being shown, the three non-American films are all in the top four for average takings per screen.

The Remains of the Day (British) took £13,200 per screen, *The Hawk* (British) £5,300, and *The Piano* (Australian/French) £2,000. Of the American films only *Aladdin*, with an average £4,800 per screen, reached the top four.

It is ludicrous that trash like *Demolition Man* should be screened at 66 times as many venues as *The Remains of the Day* (266 compared with four) and significant that the latter took eight times as much per screen.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN PAVLIN,
172 Leasons Hill, Chislehurst, Kent.

From Mr Leon Drucker

Sir, If Sir Anthony Meyer wants a film repertoire embracing the whole history of talkies and beyond he should stay at home and watch television, especially Channel 4 on any weekday afternoon, and currently BBC2, offering a triple bill of movies, which I doubt he will remember seeing before, every morning from 6.45am.

Channel 4's recent Will Hay season on Tuesday afternoons was a particular delight, as were the Powell-Pressburger classics, including a chance to revalue *A Canterbury Tale* in the past month.

I suppose it is unfortunate that the National Film Theatre is quite superfluous in my requirements, and I haven't been inside a cinema since 1981. It was *An American Werewolf in London* that helped me kick the habit for good.

Yours truly,
LEON DRUCKER,
25 Droy Avenue, NW2,
December 9.

Degrees of faith

From the Reverend J. F. Redvers Harris

Sir, When an archdeacon restates the Church's teaching he is an eccentric, but when a bishop denies it he is thoughtfully provocative. Liberalism is delightful in her toleration — provided you are with the tide.

Yours faithfully,
JONATHAN REDVERS HARRIS,
2 The White House,
The Cathedral Green,
Llandaff, South Glamorgan.

With the postal delays that often occur at this time of year, it is useful, where possible, for letters to be faxed to 071-782 5046. Please give contact telephone numbers.

NEWS

MPs to vote on gay sex at 18

■ John Major is to give Conservative MPs a free vote on a Commons decision early in the new year on lowering the age of consent for homosexuals from 21 to 18 or 16.

Amid strong indications that a vote on equalising the age of consent for homosexuals and heterosexuals could take place within the next few weeks, battle lines were being drawn for a decision that will split the main parties Page 1

Move to repair special relationship

■ British and American officials are trying to fix a meeting between President Clinton and John Major amid signs that the London-Washington relationship remains strained. Although the leaders are said to have a good relationship, bitterness persists in the White House over the action of the Tory party in helping the Republican presidential campaign Pages 1, 7

Clinton fightback

Hillary Clinton responded to new allegations about her husband's extra-marital activities by saying that his enemies were out to "destroy" him Pages 1, 9

Owen attack

Lord Owen, the European Union peace negotiator, launched an extraordinary attack on President Clinton, blaming the American administration for prolonging the war in Bosnia Pages 1, 7

Cheaper gas

The government is to end British Gas's monopoly over sales of gas to households in 1996. Customers could save £40 on an average £400 annual bill Page 1

Boy dies in river crash

Firemen pulled a seven-year-old boy from the icy waters of the River Nidd, near York, after he had been swept down stream from a mile when a car crashed into the water. He died after being taken to hospital and his father was missing Page 1

Major snubs Adams

John Major brushed aside a call from Gerry Adams for "direct and unconditional dialogue" as the IRA brought chaos to the Tube and rail network in London and the South East Page 2

Father's suicide

A curator at a stately home left a suicide note in the style of his hero, Byron, after the Child Support Agency more than trebled his maintenance payments, an inquest was told Page 3

Bentley pawned to pay for Christmas

■ The middle and upper classes are turning to pawnbrokers to help pay the cost of Christmas. One Midlands businessman has pawned his Bentley Turbo R, worth £128,000, to borrow £35,000 and in London's Belgrave a pawn shop has reported that wives who have overspent on their credit cards are pledging their jewellery Page 2

Bequest threatened

A murdered widow's wish to have her garden kept as a nature reserve has been refused by the wildlife charity to which she left the property. The charity wants to build houses Page 5

Hillsborough inquest

Tony Bland, the 96th victim of the Hillsborough football stadium disaster, died accidentally as a direct result of the injuries he received when he was crushed in the crowd, a coroner said Page 6

Yeltsin excuse

President Yeltsin said that Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the extremist leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, had profited from a protest vote Page 7

Talks fail

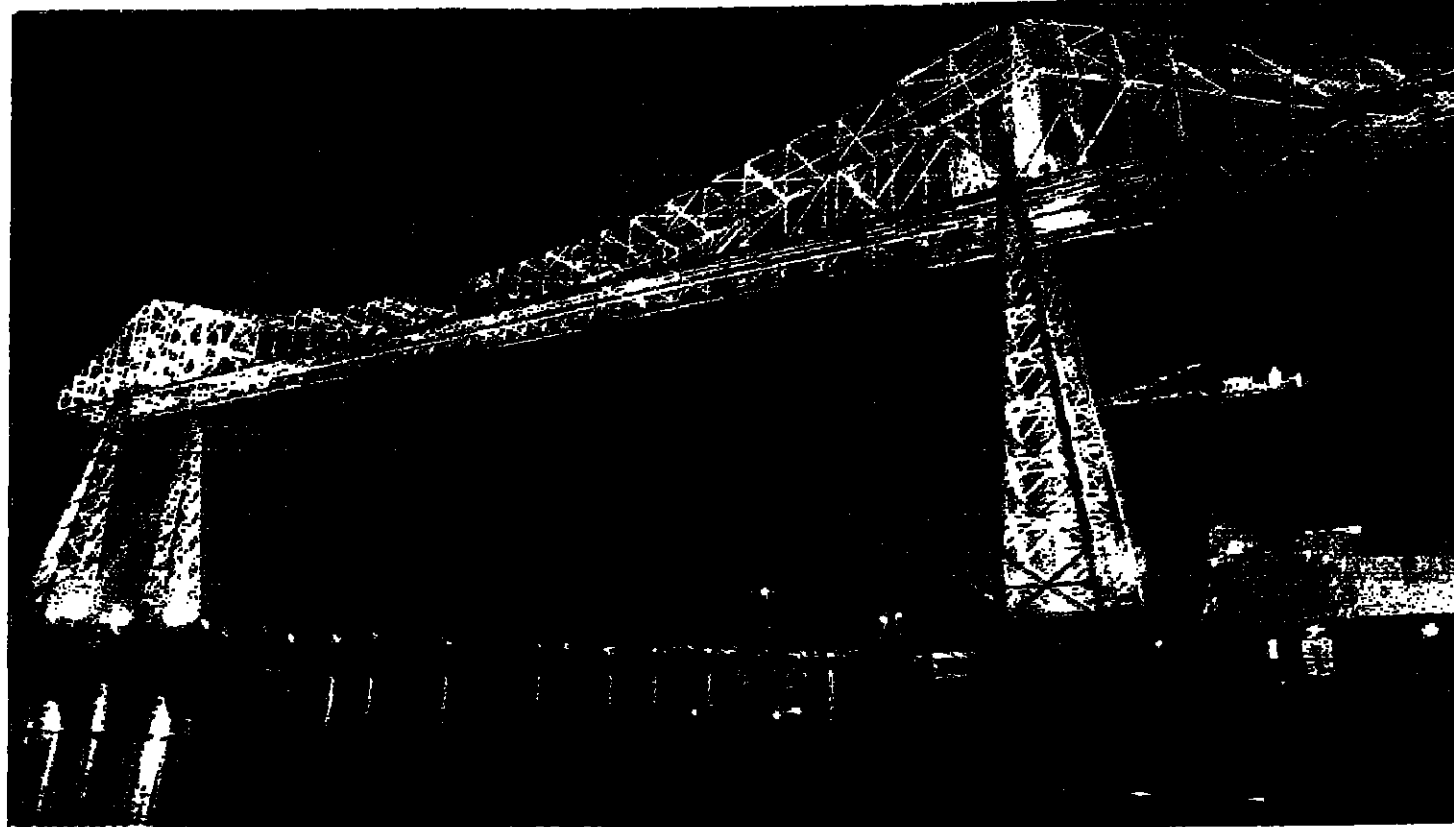
Four months of secret talks between the white rightwingers of the Afrikaner Volksfront and the African National Congress ended in anti-climax as neither would sign a vital deal Page 8

Federal Europe

Only weeks after the Maastricht treaty came into force, the Greek government launched plans for its turn at the helm of the European Union by suggesting that work on a federal constitution should start Page 8

Chinese nightmare

China has imposed price controls on 27 commodities including rice, cooking oil, pork, and eggs. Inflation, a nightmare of all Chinese regimes this century, has reached 40 per cent Page 9



What is believed to be the only working bridge of its kind in the world, the Transporter Bridge at Middlesbrough, has been lit up for Christmas. The 250-ft structure, which conveys cars and passengers across the water in a cradle, was designed in 1911

Direct Line: Peter Wood, who heads the Royal Bank of Scotland's insurance subsidiary, could end up £80 million richer under proposals to float the new insurance joint venture he and the bank plan to launch next year Page 17

Lottery: National Lottery has made the scheme significantly more attractive to potential operators after representations from the organisations already queuing up to run the contest Page 17

Markets: The FT-SE 100 Index fell 22.5 points to close at 3342.4. Sterling's trade-weighted index fell from 81.5 to 81.4 after a rise from \$1.4853 to \$1.4997 but a fall from DM2.5462 to DM2.5425 Page 20

Umpires: The International Cricket Council is to set up a panel of 20 umpires to officiate at Tests over the next three years Page 32

Football: The Football Association may have to return to the idea of installing a temporary England manager. Jimmy Armfield, the FA adviser, has confirmed that Kevin Keegan, the Newcastle United manager, was one of "four or five" people on his shortlist and conceded that England may have to wait to get him Page 32

Cricket: Alec Stewart is refusing to continue as Surrey captain until the club clarifies what it proposes to do following the dismissal of Geoff Arnold as coach Page 32

Serving heroes: Terrorism has never been simply a security issue. Many of the world's states, with seats in the United Nations, have their roots in insurrection. Walter Ellis writes about political prisoners Page 10

Falling victim: Field sports enthusiasts fear that shooting may be next on the animal rights protest list. John Young reports Page 11

Religious war: In the jargon, Christmas Day offers a unique opportunity to "hook" viewers at a time when the audience is at its biggest and, possibly, at its least critical Page 24

Oh no it isn't: The art of writing pantomime scripts has never been more complex. Simon stars need their own catch-phrases; sports personalities expect references to their former occupations; and now there are Aussie soap actors and TV gladiators Page 25

Fable retold: The National Youth Music Theatre has brought to London its adaptation of the movie, *Whistle Down the Wind*, in which children believe a fugitive murderer to be Jesus Page 26

Thames crossing: A rising British architect puts forward a proposal for a footbridge spanning the Thames between the Embankment and the South Bank Page 27

TV LISTINGS

The chief inspector leading the Barrow murder hunt is shown as getting the wrong end of the stick. *Crime Story: The White House Farm Murders* (ITV, 9 pm) Page 31

OPINION

Era of estrangement

If reaching out to Mr Clinton requires a becoming British modesty over Balkan policy — and even if it requires some more explicit apology for meddling in American elections — Mr Major should look kindly on that traditional British dish, humble pie Page 13

Illiberal democrats

To see politicians prepared to act on a principle that does not serve their electoral advantage is as refreshing as it is rare Page 13

Our Balkan cousins

It would be a better formulation of political and cultural verities to say that Greece is the only Balkan state in the European Union Page 13

CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN

If any prisoners are released, without a guaranteed and unequivocal end to the violence, it will be seen that the IRA maintains an ascendancy over the two governments Page 12

SIMON JENKINS

Christmas is to the Chancellor of the Exchequer what a MORI poll is to the prime minister, a key performance indicator. A good Christmas is an annual shot of Keynesian adrenalin, straight into the aorta of commerce Page 12

Is it time to replace the Arts Council? Page 13

THE TIMES TOMORROW

A nation of couch potatoes?

■ Food intake has fallen by 25 per cent. Nigel Hawkes asks whether the British have become too idle

The word made correct

■ Piers Paul Read reviews the biblical scholars who hope to reveal a politically correct Jesus

Star turn: Kevin meets Clint

■ Two of Hollywood's biggest stars, Costner and Eastwood, in the week's big movie, *A Perfect World*

Off the shelf holidays

■ Holidaymakers could soon be buying package trips to the sun off supermarket shelves



Joan Hillard-Reid, 76, will be reunited with her long lost son this Christmas, 50 years after he was told she had died in the London Blitz Page 5

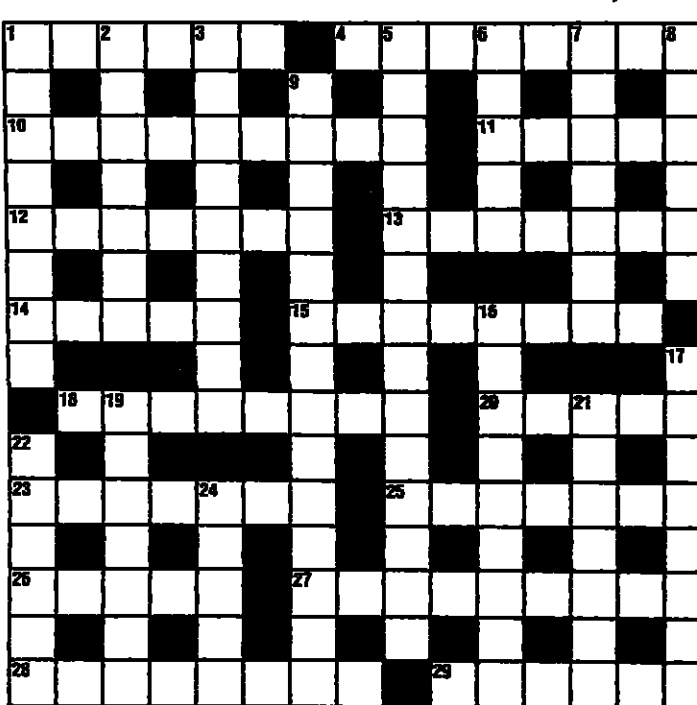


Avie Andrews, 16, was ordered to be detained indefinitely for the murder of a barrister's clerk while he was high on drink and drugs Page 3



Maria Maples at her marriage to Donald Trump, the property millionaire, in a glitzy hotel ceremony billed as New York's royal wedding Page 9

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 19,420



- ACROSS
- Artistic structure in Alabama (6)
 - Blusher, perhaps, needs this sort of surgery (8)
 - Begin industrial action abroad (5,3)
 - Large, regal woman gets doctor in for onset of neuritis (5)
 - Foolish person worrying "What if liberal gets in?" (4,3)
 - held back in favour of someone person (7)
 - Express remorse for losing head, showing the white feather (5)
 - English leather manufactured in 5 (8)
 - Crosspatch turned up around the ship (8)
 - Was brought round — what a relief! (5)
 - Pacific American delivers the coup de grace (7)
 - It's all right about artist's concubine (7)
- DOWN
- Main road is heading for trouble (6)
 - Tea-leaf from prickly head of plant — cut lower (7)
 - As a result of ire, we talk recklessly (4,5)
 - It's wonderful in space (3,2,4,5)
 - In play Barbara, a New Zealand leader, endlessly embraces Jack (5)
 - Chap put up a high ball — a gamble (7)
 - Arrest said to be responsible for anger (6)
 - Make an offer with pawn; to this, queen is moved (3,3,5)
 - Figure ruined, they say, by fish (9)
 - Scot, kept under observation, cheated (8)
 - Short distance covered by love letter once (7)
 - I invested in a group of shops put up to supply rights (7)
 - Complaint made by wife to king (6)
 - Thrash leaders of the outbreak, who expected leniency (5)

Solution to Puzzle No 19,419

EPISODIC MARRROW
I C U O I O
SCARAB MONOGRAM
T A B E I O A
R U P P Y N S E Q U I N
R H N O F A I
J E M E L A M A R Y U L I S
I A C E V A E
T E M P E R A T E B U Y E R
T U O G D G V
E F F O R T R A I N E A D
R F C O S A C
B A I L Y C O A B O U R
V E R S I L E
G A R R E T T I M B E R E D

This puzzle was solved within 30 minutes by 16 of 22 finalists in the 1993 national final of The Times Knockout Crossword Championship

Times Two Crossword, page 32

THE TIMES WEATHERCALL

For the latest region by region forecast, 24 hours a day, dial 0891 500 followed by the appropriate code.

Greater London	701
East of London	702
West of London	703
Devon & Cornwall	704
Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset	705
Berkshire, Bucks, Oxon	706
Bedfordshire & Essex	707
Northampton, Cambs	708
West Mid & Sh. Glam & Gwent	709
Stroud, Hereford & Wex	710
Central Midlands	711
Leics & Humberside	712
Dyfed & Powys	713
Gwynedd & Chwyd	714
NW England	715
W & S Yorks & Dales	716
N.E. England	717
Cumbria & Lake District	718
SW Scotland	719
W Central Scotland	720
Edin & Fife, Orkney & Shetland	721
E Central Scotland	722
Grampian & E Highlands	723
W Scotland	724
Orkney, Shetland & Shetland	725
N Ireland	726

Weather call is charged at 36p per minute (cheap rate) and 48p per minute at all other times.

AA ROADWATCH

For the latest AA traffic and roadworks information, 24 hours a day, dial 0336 401 followed by the appropriate code.

London & SE traffic, roadworks	731
Area within M25	732
Essex/Herts/Beds/Bucks/Berks/Oxon	733
Kent/Surrey/Sussex/Hants	734
M25 London Orbital only	735
National traffic and roadworks	736
National motorways	737
West Country	738
Wales	739
Midlands	740
East Angles	741
North-West England	742
North-East England	743
Scotland	744
Northern Ireland	745

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The morning will be rather wet. Brighter, showery weather will follow to all areas in the afternoon. The showers may be persistent over Northern Ireland, Scotland and northern England. Some of the showers will fall as sleet or snow, especially over Scottish mountains. In the evening, it will turn dry in many places as the showers become confined to northern and western coasts and hills. Outlook: rain, then wintry showers. Windy.

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East of London	702	14	SW	100	0.8
West of London	703	14	SW	100	0.8
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Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset	705	14	SW	100	0.8
Berkshire, Bucks, Oxon	706	14	SW	100	0.8
Bedfordshire & Essex	707	14	SW	100	0.8
Northampton, Cambs	708	14	SW	100	0.8
West Mid & Sh. Glam & Gwent	709	14	SW	100	0.8
Stroud, Hereford & Wex	710	14	SW	100	0.8
Central Midlands	711	14	SW	100	0.8
Leics & Humberside	712	14	SW	100	0.8
Dyfed & Powys	713	14	SW	100	0.8
Gwynedd & Chwyd	714	14	SW	100	0.8
NW England	715	14	SW	100	0.8
W & S Yorks & Dales	716	14	SW	100	0.8
N.E. England	717	14	SW	100	0.8
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E Central Scotland	722	14	SW	100	0.8
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MEDIA 24

Who will win the Christmas TV ratings battle?

ARTS 25-27

Botham: a good man to have on your side in a panto

Man with the golf world at his feet

TELEVISION AND RADIO
Page 31

THE TIMES

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 22 1993



European investor: Carlo Caracciolo, chairman of Editoriale L'Espresso, which publishes *La Repubblica*, arriving at City Road, London, yesterday

New investors sought for Newspaper Publishing

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

NEWSPAPER Publishing, owner of *The Independent* and *The Independent on Sunday*, is to begin negotiations with three other Fleet Street newspaper groups that have expressed an interest in owning all or part of the group.

As part of a new business plan agreed yesterday, sources said that the board had unanimously agreed that it would now be prepared to "talk to anybody who has put their hands up" to identify themselves as a potential investor in the company.

The move clears the way for Newspaper Publishing to open formal talks with *The Daily Telegraph*, owned by Conrad Black, and *Mirror Group Newspapers*, which have both held informal discussions with Newspaper Publishing.

Associated Newspapers, which owns the *Mail* papers, is no longer believed to be interested in making an agreed investment.

The new business plan is aimed at raising just under £20 million to enable the company to half the slide in the circulation of both *Independent* titles. According to the Audit Bureau of Circulations, sales of the *Independent* fell 11.51 per cent year on year to 313,000 copies in November. The *Independent on Sunday* has lost 55,000 sales in the past year, a fall of 13.6 per cent to 356,700.

The board has indicated, however, that it would not be rushed or bullied into accepting cash help from rival newspaper owners at any price. It believes that talk of an

impending financial "crisis" at the two *Independent* titles is exaggerated as existing overdraft agreements do not expire until the end of March.

In an agreed statement, the board said that the company had made "considerable progress" and would make a further announcement early in the new year, possibly as early as the first two weeks in January.

A number of different options were examined that would allow a secure future to emerge from the restructuring process now being undertaken, the statement said.

The announcement made it clear that Newspaper Publishing has not ruled out the possibility of financing its restructuring plan by from City institutions — an option favoured by Patrick Morrissey, its new chief executive. However, its main and *La Repubblica* of Italy, are believed to favour a cash injection from a trade investor with whom the *Independent* titles could share printing and distribution facilities. That view is shared by Mr Whitman Smith and Matthew Symonds, co-founder of the *Independent*, who, together with the Spaniards and Italians, control 48 per cent of shares. The European investors have not ruled out the possibility of financing the business plan from their own pockets with a rights issue.

Mr Morrissey's business plan is designed to secure the future of the papers beyond the end of 1996. It is based on a ten-week study by nine internal task forces, which have examined every aspect of the business, and is believed to involve further cost-cutting measures on both titles.

BUSINESS EDITOR
Robert Ballantyne

BUSINESS TODAY

TAKING OFF



British Aerospace's Avro International, which builds regional jets, does not look like a business that has just escaped closure
Page 21

WRITING DOWN

Post Office profits fell in the latest half year because of a recently ended freeze on letter rates
Page 19

TICKING OFF



The Indian government is to impose stringent penalties on Standard Chartered
Page 18

MOPPING UP

Wessex Water topped all the other water companies with a 10 per cent rise in the half-year dividend
Page 19

British Gas to lose domestic monopoly

BY ROSS TIEMAN
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Government is to end British Gas's monopoly of sales of gas to households in 1996, but the company will not be made to get rid of its gas sales arm, Michael Heseltine, President of the Board of Trade, said yesterday.

The decision is expected to result in customers being offered savings of up to £40 on an average annual bill of £400. It ends months of uncertainty after the completion this summer of a year-long enquiry by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission into the UK gas market.

Mr Heseltine rejected MMC proposals to break-up British Gas. Instead, he plans phased opening of the domestic tariff market to rival companies, with full competition effective in April 1998, three to five years earlier than the MMC envisaged.

The early shift to competition accords with advice by Clare Spottiswoode, the gas industry regulator, on the MMC conclusions. Opening the gas market will now coin-

Detailed proposals for the operation of the competitive market and a review of the price formula that limits British Gas price increases will be published in the new year

cide with regional electricity companies' loss of their monopoly to supply households. Mr Heseltine said he had chosen to introduce "full, effective and self-sustaining competition" as soon as possible. "Choice for consumers is the best possible guarantee that they will obtain value," he said.

The decision to focus on encouraging competition rather than obliging British Gas to divest its supply business, as the MMC had proposed, was widely welcomed yesterday.

Ian Powe, director of the Gas Consumers Council, praised Mr Heseltine's "masterly compromise between revolution and evolution". Cedric Brown, British Gas chief executive, said that his decision to seek a wide-ranging review of competition in the gas industry had been vindicated. "The announcement gives us the opportunity to plan for the future of our

business in the UK and the world market," he said. However, there was concern from the National Consumer Council and trade unions that poor customers might lose out and that care should be taken to ensure safety is upheld.

Detailed proposals for operating the competitive market and a review of the formula that limits British Gas to price rises of inflation minus 5 per cent will be published by Ofgas, the industry regulator, early next year.

British Gas is clearly seeking relaxation of the price cap to take account of higher costs that it claims will arise from separation of its businesses. Responding to yesterday's announcement, Mr Brown said that there was no likelihood of household gas prices rising, but "I think the rate of decline of prices may slow".

Ms Spottiswoode said that British Gas, as distribution

system operator, would remain responsible for safety and handling emergencies.

Licences to supply homes in competition with British Gas will be available nationally and regionally. Ms Spottiswoode said that licensees would be obliged to publish tariffs and supply all who wanted supplies.

Competition will be limited for the first two years. From April 1996, all business customers using fewer than 2,500 therms a year will be free to seek supplies outside British Gas. That will open another 300,000 customers to rivals.

At the same time, independent suppliers will be able to sign up 5 per cent of British Gas's household customers, on a first-come first-served basis, with a similar share of the market available in 1997. British Gas has more than 18 million household customers.

In commercial and industrial gas markets, where competition has soared in recent years, rivals have seized more than 70 per cent of business.

Great gas rush, page 18
Pennington, page 19
Tempus, page 21

Bigger prize for lottery operator

BY MARTIN WALLER
DEPUTY CITY EDITOR

THE body that will administer the National Lottery has made the scheme significantly more attractive to potential operators after representations from the wide range of organisations already queuing to run the contest.

Peter Davis, the deputy chairman of Abbey National who is director general of the lottery, said that interest in, and enthusiasm for, the contest had been "very encouraging".

Mr Davis has published the formal invitation to Apply, setting out parameters for successful bids to operate the lottery, which some observers believe could ultimately command turnover exceeding £4 billion a year, of which, 15 per cent, or potentially £600 million, would go to the operator.

Among amendments to the initial plan are three changes to benefit the eventual operator:
□ The licence will run to September 30, 2001, six months longer than initially envisaged. Some potential bidders had said that a six-year term, as at first suggested, would not allow sufficient pay-back on the high investment.
□ Ditching of a fixed minimum payment to charities that will benefit from the lottery, a requirement opposed by potential applicants.
□ Reduction of the "termination payment" payable by an operator who abandons the scheme or is stripped of the licence for any reason.

One lottery contender, The Great British Lottery Company, has made Lord Kingsdown, who, as Robin Leigh-Pemberton, was Bank of England Governor, and Sir Kenneth Newman, former Metropolitan Police Commissioner, non-executive directors.

Letters, page 13
Pennington, page 19

Peter Wood keeps Midas touch

BY PATRICIA TEHAN
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

PETER Wood, who heads Direct Line, the Royal Bank of Scotland's insurance subsidiary, could end up £80 million richer under proposals to float the new insurance joint venture he and the bank plan to launch next year.

The new company, targeting higher-risk customers than Direct Line, is to be set up as part of a deal to buy out the attractive bonus scheme Mr Wood enjoys through Direct Line. Mr Wood will put £1 million into the company for a 40 per cent stake and 51 per cent of the voting

rights. The Royal Bank will put in £1.5 million for 60 per cent of the shares and a further £22.5 million for 22.5 million 5 per cent cumulative redeemable preference shares.

In a letter to the bank's shareholders, accompanying the annual report, Dr George Mathewson, chief executive, said that if the company reached a value of £200 million, as determined by a merchant bank, Mr Wood could elect for it to be floated. If the Royal Bank objected to a flotation, Mr Wood could elect to acquire all the preference shares and all the ordinary shares for an amount determined by the estimated flotation

value. If the company were floated at £200 million, Mr Wood's stake would be worth £80 million.

Direct Line's target motor market is 12 million customers; the new company will target six million higher-risk drivers not accepted by Direct Line.

In the year to September 30, Mr Wood's Direct Line bonus scheme earned him £18.2 million, up from £6 million the previous year. Last month, the Royal Bank said it planned to buy out the scheme for £24 million — £13 million for giving up the scheme, £4 million for his accrued bonus until January, and £7 million in pension contributions.

STOCK MARKET	
FT-SE 100 3342.4 -22.5	DOW JONES 3742.07 -13.14
Midday trading figure	

THE POUND	
Dm 2.5425 -0.0037	US \$ 1.4897 +0.0044

GOLD	
BRENT CRUDE	
\$13.50 per barrel (Feb)	

LONDON CLOSING PRICES

MARKETS IN DETAIL PAGE 20, SHARE PRICES PAGE 23

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WILLIAMS

More winners than losers in great gas rush

ON APRIL 1, 1996, a million of British Gas's 18.25 million household customers will be able to sign up with rival suppliers at prices that should enable them to shave at least 10 per cent off their gas bills. A year later, a further million British Gas customers will be free to jump ship, and, in April 1998, all remaining customers will be free to follow suit.

The chances are, of course, that they won't. Throughout a year-long enquiry into the UK gas market by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission and the subsequent six months of lobbying, British Gas has focused on difficulties of a more competitive regime.

Executives argued that rivals would "cherry pick" the most profitable customers and leave British Gas as supplier of last resort, servicing low-usage households from which it was almost impossible to make a profit.

Those worries seemed to have retreated

British Gas is bullish about imminent competition, as details of protection for poorer customers are awaited, Ross Tieman says

yesterday. In spite of the decision of Michael Heseltine, President of the Board of Trade, to force the pace of competition, British Gas seemed confident that cost-cutting and improved customer focus would enable it to respond effectively to competition.

When British Gas was privatised nine years ago, many argued that gas supply was a natural monopoly. However, Ogas, the industry regulator, showed that customers benefit if rival suppliers compete to supply business users, paying British Gas a fee for delivering the fuel through its pipeline system.

According to British Gas, some 30 independent suppliers have now secured a 70 per cent

share of the firm contract gas market in Britain. The government's surprise decision 18 months ago to lower the threshold of competition from 25,000 to 2,500 showed that economies were not confined to big users. Since that decision, independents have secured almost a third of the small business market. Mr Heseltine's decision to extend competition to the domestic market follows a trend.

A study for 12 independent suppliers, published earlier this year, suggested that a saving of 11.3 per cent could be achieved in the annual bill of the smallest gas users, even when, typically, that bill was little more than £55.

Details of the workings of a fully competitive

market remain to be settled. Clare Spottiswoode, director-general of gas supply, will, in the new year, say how she proposes to prevent discrimination against the poorest customers.

It is already clear that licences can be drafted to oblige suppliers to offer similar prices and terms to all customers in their licence area. Suggestions that consumers furthest from North Sea gas fields would have to pay premium prices for gas appear exaggerated.

Ogas may yet be obliged to introduce a rationing system to ensure that no more than 5 per cent of British Gas customers defect in each of the first two years of competition. However, price cuts, and further improvements in service, are likely to deliver similar benefits to those who stay with their present supplier.

Pennington, page 19
Tempus, page 21

Western banks indicted over Bombay scandal

By Patricia Teahan, Banking Correspondent

STRINGENT penalties are to be imposed on Standard Chartered and three other banks by the Indian government.

The long-awaited report by an Indian parliamentary committee into a \$1.28 billion securities trading scandal in Bombay, uncovered last year, recommends heavy punishments for the Indian operations of Standard Chartered, BankAmerica, ANZ Grindley and Citicorp. Indian banks are also criticised.

D.R. Mehta, deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the country's central bank, said the RBI would take action against banks indicted by the committee.

Standard Chartered is subjected to harsher criticism than the others. It is accused in the report of "dummy transactions" to transfer profit or conceal the true extent of

depreciation in securities. It is also accused of manipulating investment and accounting records. Citicorp is accused of trying to conceal the turnover of business with brokers.

On Standard Chartered, the report says: "The demarcation of responsibilities between the front office and the back office got confused and controls totally weakened. There has been a complete abdication of responsibilities by the back office."

Standard Chartered made a £305 million loss on Indian operations in 1992, after raising its provision for possible bad debts resulting from the scandal by £112 million, to £272 million.

Yesterday, a spokesman for the bank said the problems were caused by the inability of Bombay's stock market to cope with the boom 18 months ago. He said the report ex-

pressed some extreme views. Standard Chartered has recovered £25.9 million in a settlement of its legal action against the National Housing Bank of India and another £7.9 million from the State Bank of Patiala. The spokesman said: "We as a bank and other foreign banks and other parties in India have been defrauded on a massive scale by a scam."

The 322-page report says the four banks were at the heart of the scandal and recommends that the Reserve Bank of India should consider "disallowing repatriation of profits through irregular securities transactions and other malpractices."

It also recommends that their licences be suspended and that "legal action should be pursued both in India and the foreign country concerned."

The report also says

Manmohan Singh, India's finance minister, is accountable, as his ministry failed to stop the scandal, in which banks and brokers were accused of colluding to siphon money illegally from the inter-bank securities market to fuel a boom in the Bombay exchange.

The report says: "They (the banks) have acted in an unbecoming manner, indulged in large-scale security deals highly disproportionate to their normal requirements and in the process not only violated RBI guidelines but also their own set procedures and prima facie the laws of the countries of their origin."

The Reserve Bank does not escape censure. The report accuses it of "gross negligence" in failing to uncover the scandal.

Tempus, page 21



Manmohan Singh, finance minister, "failed to act"

LEGAL NOTICES

HAYDON VENTILATION LTD
Presented (20th December 1993)
Notice is hereby given that the above-named company, duly incorporated and held at 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
HAYDON VENTILATION LTD
Notice is hereby given that the above-named company, duly incorporated and held at 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

THE INSOLVENCY ACT 1986
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN
That the following is a list of the names of the persons who are entitled to receive dividends from the assets of the company named in the first column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the second column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the third column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the fourth column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the fifth column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the sixth column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the seventh column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the eighth column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the ninth column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the tenth column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the eleventh column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the twelfth column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the thirteenth column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the fourteenth column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the fifteenth column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the sixteenth column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the seventeenth column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the eighteenth column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the nineteenth column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the twentieth column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the twenty-first column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in the twenty-second column of the table below, in the liquidation of the company named in

□ A price to pay for brave new world of Gas □ Lord Young sounds a sour lottery note □ Bureaucrats still flying the red flag

Heseltine leaves bullet unbitten

□ FOR ORDINARY private customers, the golden age of reliable cheap gas is over. For ordinary private investors, the promises of privatisation have finally been abandoned. Simply for the sake of ideology. That is not the message the Department of Trade and Industry offered yesterday. The difference between image and reality probably explains why, nearing five months after the monopolies commission delivered its report on British Gas, Michael Heseltine waited that extra few days so that he did not have to face Parliament before it rose for Christmas and why he has carefully structured his response so that he will not have to face Parliament with a Bill to divest British Gas of its trading business. The outcome underlines the weakness of the President of the Board of Trade. If the coal fiasco was a *fait accompli* by the oil energy department, the gas ruling shows signs of last minute intervention from the Treasury by Michael Portillo.

Treasury influence might well explain why the costs of eliminating the monopoly gas tariff to small users have been dishonestly left to one side. Who is to pay for them? Almost certainly both residential consumers and British Gas shareholders. The commission's report was at least transparent. It acknowledged

that opening the tariff market, unwinding cross-subsidies to smaller users, would implicitly raise prices to them. The Government has left that for discussion, though competition has been advanced a year. The commission recommended a 1 per cent annual easing of the price limit to allow for the last top-slicing of the tariff in 1992. That has been put off for discussion by Ofgas next year. The commission also accepted that the cost of reorganising British Gas for the sake of public policy should be met by customers. That too has been swept under the carpet. With VAT hurting gas and electricity customers in two stages from next April, the Government does not want to tell them how much they must pay.

No wonder British Gas shares fell yesterday. It looks disturbingly likely that shareholders will be levied for reorganisation without being able to realise the depleted value of the trading business. Given cavalier treatment of the 25-year licence, it also looks likely that — in order to stimulate competition — Ofgas will not allow British Gas to

compete on level terms. It has already been forced to give away business probably worth an eventual £200 million profit a year. Foreign utilities aside, the main gainers could be regional electricity utilities who should be able to make a turn supplying gas through EC pipelines. British Gas has already made its response clear. Rather than compete in electricity, it is bringing in a new chairman from outside the industry pledged "to focus on adding value for the two million loyal shareholders and institutions" who finance capital spending. Not much of that is likely to be in Britain.

Sweeteners for the lottery

□ THE message from Peter Davis, Director-General of the National Lottery, is that the enthusiasm demonstrated by potential applicants "and other interested parties" has been "very encouraging". Unlike the DG of the UK's much trumpeted £4 billion national lottery would admit otherwise



but, judging from yesterday's relaxation of conditions attached to the "draft" licence proposals, it is conceivable that interest displayed by potential applicants may have proved somewhat less encouraging than the Department of National Heritage originally envisaged.

News of a six-month extension of the licence to end-September 2001 will inevitably be welcomed by the competing consortia, bearing in mind that the "dream licence" would have had a 10-year time-span. Hopes that the venture will be up and running by the autumn of 1994 have always erred on the optimistic, not least because of the time required by the Government in respect of its "fit and proper" due

diligence enquiries and the fact that major supermarket chains — perceived as an integral aspect of the distribution network — will hardly welcome hi-tech distractions during the run up to Christmas 1994. Assuming a spring 1995 launch, operators thus enjoy a 6½-year run on an estimated £150 million/£200 million start up project.

Another strong sweetener comes in the shape of a significant easing of potential liability in the event of revocation of the licence with a ceiling of the greater of £40 million, or 24 per cent of turnover, being distinctly less onerous than the Government's original proposals. Similarly, the fixed minimum payment requirement has been deleted, while Davis's call for "transparency" will presumably serve to sharpen up the tendering process.

Major contenders such as Camelot, NM Rothschild and the Great British Lottery Company have already proved relatively transparent but, what yesterday's details should herald is clarification of the make up of other potential consortia includ-

ing the likes of Rainbow, chaired by Sir Patrick Sheehy, the Tote (possibly in harness with GEC and Thorn EMI) and Rank.

Meanwhile, it fell upon Lord Young, co-founder with Richard Branson of the Lottery Foundation, to produce a somewhat discordant reaction. In his words: "We welcome the beginning of what we hope will be a clean fight. But why should the fight be anything but clean? This is, after all, nothing more than a competitive tender."

No free trade in the air

□ SERVICES in the Gatt. Forget it. In the airline business, bureaucrats go first and planes follow at a safe distance, if at all. Within Europe, state subsidies reign supreme although they have theoretically been phased out. Yesterday, the Commission approved an injection of £170 million into Aer Lingus by the Irish government, which has been so co-operative in crucial votes. There are conditions but they will cause hollow laughs at

British Airways, which pulled out of uneconomic Irish routes, and at British Midland, which must now face subsidised competition. In European aviation, as in steel (also left out of Gatt), British firms were forced to be commercial years ago, but must now stand with one hand behind their back as others pile in subsidies to make supposedly final adjustments. We can already be fairly sure that more will be needed at Air France.

In America's cut-throat world of unfettered airline capitalism, the bureaucrats still walks in front with a red flag. America seems to have a new agenda, despite its bureaucratic advantage, in their favourite sport of bilateral negotiation, of having the world's biggest protected home market. Since America is not getting all the through routes and Heathrow slots it wants via national bilaterals, it really wants a big EC bilateral that can be forced on member states. Meanwhile, it is making life sticky. Since the Uruguay Round turned into an EC/US bilateral, that switch may be inevitable. It should not be allowed to enhance Brussels bureaucracy. In the battle for airport slots, market forces could work perfectly well by themselves if airlines were allowed, indeed encouraged, to buy and sell their existing slots at popular airports.

Wessex tops water table with 10% payout rise

By CARL MORTISHED

WESSEX Water trumped its peers in the water industry with a 10 per cent rise in the half-year payout to shareholders to 8p after boosting pre-tax profits to £53 million from £44 million in the six months to September 30.

Wessex is the last of the water utilities to report its half year figure and the dividend rise caused its shares to rise 5p to 72½, only to fall back later to 71½ in a weak market. Nicholas Hood, chairman, credited the improved result to a good performance at Wessex Waste Management and containment of costs in the regulated water and sewerage business.

"We have maintained high standards and at the same time improved efficiency" he said.

Profits from Wessex Waste Management, the water company's joint venture with Waste Management International, rose from £3.2 million to £8.4 million in the half year, contributing £4.2 million to Wessex Water's bottom line. Mr Hood said that about 50 per cent of the profit rise in the waste business was generated from acquisitions while the remainder was internally generated.

Long term, the group aims to generate as much profit from waste management as from the water business. Wessex tapped its shareholders for £84 million in a rights issue in January which, in part, funded its share of the £100 million purchase by Wessex Waste of NPC's waste management business.

Later in the year, the non-regulated business expanded



Nicholas Hood sees long term benefits of waste

further in waste management and landfill, buying two businesses in August and bolting on a further two in November, plus a landfill site. Mr Hood said that landfill had been a

difficult business in the recent period due to delays in implementing tighter environmental legislation but new licensing requirements, which come into effect on May 1 next

year would improve prices, he explained.

A lot of landfill will be handed back to local authorities and prices should improve, he said. Recently, small contractors have been cutting prices for waste to fill up sites which may not survive the new licensing rules, he added.

Turnover in the core business, Wessex Water Services, was up 6 per cent to £109 million after water bills increased by the same rate to customers.

The utility's operating profit increased from £41 million to £46 million. Mr Hood said that his objective in the current periodic review of water prices was to obtain a good deal for customers as well as shareholders but he believed that Ofwat's proposed return on capital of 5 to 6 per cent was too low.

"We are less disadvantaged than some companies on the cost of capital issue but there is going to be some eyeball to eyeball negotiation," he said. Disappointment over lack of success by the government in rolling back the timescale for implementation of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive has caused anxiety in the water industry about pricing of water services and permitted rates of return.

Wessex Water spent some £60 million on capital expenditure in the first half and expects to spend £120 million in the full year. A major factor determining future expenditure for Wessex will be whether or not water bodies such as the Severn Estuary are classified as sea for the purposes of waste water treatment.

Tempos, page 21

Care urged on offer by Lloyd's

By PHILIP PANGALOS

THE Association of Lloyd's Members urged names to think hard before rejecting the £900 million settlement that Lloyd's has offered in compensation for huge losses suffered. Some Lloyd's action groups have already rejected the offer.

Neil Shaw, the association's chairman, said: "Names should not feel under any pressure to make an early decision." He added: "A somewhat unsatisfactory settlement now may be more attractive than a scramble of litigation in which there will be casualties."

□ Prominent members of London's Greek shipping community plan to invest in Lloyd's when the insurance market opens to corporate capital next year. They have formed Wentworth Underwriting, which starts with a capacity of £10 million.

Sanctions threatened in US-UK air dispute

By COLIN NARBROUGH AND PHILIP ROBINSON

THREATS from senior officials that America intends to play rough with British Airways to gain increased access for US carriers to Heathrow has increased the chances of aviation war breaking out next month.

A Ministry of Transport spokesman in London said America's rejection of British proposals for a phased move to total liberalisation of air transport was coupled with its refusal to give Britain something in return for more access to Heathrow.

Continued failure to reach a deal, after unfruitful talks a fortnight ago between British and American officials, is likely to lead to sanctions.

The latest American threats were delivered by transportation and foreign affairs officials in a private briefing at

which it was made clear that Britain and America remain as far apart as ever.

No more talks are expected until after the 60-day code-sharing permit granted by the US to BA and USAir, its American partner, expires on January 12. US officials warned that BA would not be allowed to increase its near 25 per cent stake in USAir and may have rights jointly to display flights rescinded.

Britain earlier threatened retaliatory action if code-sharing permits are not extended, saying that it will start by banning one American flight a week into Heathrow. The British offer is for one additional route into Heathrow each year for American carriers.

BA invested almost \$400 million for a near-25 per cent stake in USAir with plans to increase that to 49 per cent. It has applied for a near-75 per cent increase in the number of US cities it may serve on a code-sharing basis.

America has also threatened to block code-sharing plans of Lufthansa, the German carrier, and United Airlines due to start next month.

□ Aer Lingus, the Irish state airline, was yesterday given the go-ahead by the European Commission to receive government subsidies worth £167.5 million. The aid will come in three tranches spread over two years and Aer Lingus can only use the money for restructuring purposes, it cannot expand its operating fleet and it cannot increase the number of seats offered on its main Ireland-UK routes above previously agreed levels.

Resurgent Berisford on acquisition trail

By SUSAN GILCHRIST

BERISFORD International is poised to make a significant acquisition in engineering and building products. It will bring Alan Bowkett, chief executive, closer to his goal of taking the property-to-agriculture group into the FT-SE 100 index.

Mr Bowkett, who has brought Berisford back from the brink of financial collapse, said the group expected to announce a deal early in the new year. He declined to name the target company but said: "Our shareholders would expect our first acquisition to be in Britain and in line with management experience in engineering and building prod-

ucts." Berisford narrowly failed to take over C&J Clark, the troubled Somerset shoe maker, this year.

Mr Bowkett said the impending deal would be funded through a rights issue. It would mark the first step in rebuilding Berisford, which has seen sales fall from more than £2 billion to less than £100 million in five years.

The company unveiled a pre-tax loss of £5 million for the year to September 30, against a £65 million loss last year. Turnover fell from £130.5 million to £72.3 million, partly reflecting continuing disposals.

Again there is no dividend.

Clouds gather over UK trade prospects

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S trade deficit with countries outside the European Community more than doubled last month, the result of a worrying fall in exports and continued buoyancy in imports.

The non-EC deficit shot up to £767 million from an upwardly revised £372 million in October, according to the Central Statistical Office. Excluding oil and erratic items such as ships and precious stones, the deficit increased to £634 million, from £386 million in October.

November's deficit was expected to be much larger than October's — which was regarded as erratic and

unsustainably good. The CSO noted that the deficits for the three months to November and for the three months to August were both about £2 billion.

November saw a fall of 7.5 per cent in the value of exports, while import values remained unchanged.

There are also signs that trade volume is turning against Britain. According to Robert Lind, of UBS, underlying imports rose by 4 per cent in the three months to November, compared with an increase of only 1 per cent in underlying export volumes. "If these trends continue, the non-EC deficit will widen," he said.

Price freeze costs Post Office a packet

By GEORGE SIVELL
ASSISTANT BUSINESS EDITOR

THE Post Office suffered a dive in first-half profits from £135 million to £59 million in the six months to the end of September. It blamed a freeze on letter prices from September 1991 to this November for the result.

However, Michael Heron, the Post Office chairman, expressed determination to meet the external financing limit set by central government of £181 million for the year to March 31.

The limit, the amount of cash the government drains from the Post Office

each year, is more than three times that of the previous year. It is set to rise again, to £226 million, in 1994-95 after an increase of £50 million revealed in the November Budget. Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, also set the Post Office's external financing limits at £213 million for 1995-96 and £178 million for 1996-97.

Mr Heron has become increasingly critical of the commercial uncertainty created by the absence of a decision on the Post Office's future. It has put £840 million into central government coffers since 1981 and claims to have been profitable and free of subsidy for 17 years. Post Office profitability is traditionally

higher in the second half, when business is boosted by the Christmas rush. Business is presently said to be much busier than the record 63 million items a day handled on average during the first half, itself a rise of 2 million a week on the first half of last year. The Post Office now claims to serve more than nine out of ten customers within five minutes. Royal Mail profits were £55 million in the first half, down from £131 million. Parcelforce losses improved from £21 million to £17 million despite difficult trading conditions. Express revenues rose 27 per cent. Post Office Counters profits slipped from £12 million to £10 million.

CONTRACT NOTICE FOR ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND PURCHASING SERVICES (PRE-QUALIFICATION)

As part of its market testing programme the Housing Corporation hereby invites companies to apply to provide accounts payable and purchasing services on behalf of the organisation.

The successful company will be expected to take control of accounts payable systems; provide a help desk facility; provide information for the half year and annual accounts preparation; raise invoices; provide accountable cash management systems; manage the Corporation's fixed assets; provide competitive purchase systems on behalf of the Corporation and manage the external distribution of the Housing Corporation's priced and free publications.

To qualify, companies are asked to provide copies of the last three years published accounts; details of the size and scope of contracts held by the company in the last three years in relation to accounting, auditing, book-keeping and procurement; quality management systems the company would employ in such a contract and any accreditations held and details of senior staff to be employed in the management of the contract. Additional information may be requested before tenders are invited or with tender submissions.

The contract will be awarded to the economically most advantageous submission, taking into account (in order of importance):

- skills, experience and resources;
- quality systems;
- cost;
- and any other criteria listed in the tender document.

The tender process is governed by the procedures and timescales dictated by the Official Journal of the European Community, Restricted Procedure notice.

Companies will be expected to bid for all of the requirement. The contract will last three years.

The closing date for applications is 18 January 1994 and the final date for issuing of invitations to tender will be 1 February 1994, a maximum of eight companies will be invited to tender.

Applications should be sent to:
Mr J A McLarnon
The Housing Corporation
149 Tottenham Court Road
London W1P 0BN.



WORKING TOWARDS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES



Charles Masefield, the president of Avro, stands in front of a BAE 146, the forerunner of the new RJ series, ready for delivery to China

With or without Taiwan BAe's Avro is ready to fly

Avro International Aerospace does not look like a business that has just escaped closure by the skin of its teeth. The million square foot assembly hall on Woodford Aerodrome, Cheshire, is freshly painted and neatly organised, the half-built aeroplanes a testament to in-flowing orders and cash. Demand may not be brisk. But a sweeping reorganisation has cut the cost of building each plane by a third.

Little more than a year ago, British Aerospace, Avro's parent, was desperate to find a partner to help it staunch Avro's losses and increase orders. The partner it found was Taiwan Aerospace Corporation, a shell company vested with the ambitions of a tiger economy to become a world force in aerospace. After a year of desultory talks and Taiwan vacillation, BAE looks further from a deal than ever. But instead of pulling the plug it has given Avro a second chance.

For the 2,400 directly employed on Avro's Regional Jetliner (RJ) programme, that must come as a great relief. But the decision, conveyed in a memo to staff from Dick Evans, BAE chief executive, was also a matter of national importance. To understand why Britain's civil aerospace industry is at a crossroads, one has to look both forward and back.

BAe, the standard-bearer of the UK aircraft industry, was created in the mid-1970s by the unification through nationalisation of a clutch of competing planemakers. It inherited a ragbag of products of varying quality and a hideously inefficient cost structure. Momentum concealed an appalling wastage of both strategy and management until the day, two years ago, when recession combined with stock exchange rights issue requirements to strip away the charade of profits and lay BAE's failings bare.

The response, directed with great rigour by John Cahill, the new-broom chairman, may ultimately find a place in the management textbooks. But there is still some way to go. With the core defence side insulated by government spending, Cahill has focused on the loss-making civil aviation arm. BAE's participation as wing-maker in Airbus Industrie, the European jetliner consortium, set the tone.

Cahill sold BAE's business-jet activity, isolated regional jets into a single unit, Avro, and brought turbo-prop activities under a single roof, at Prestwick Aircraft, in Scotland. Managers were told to get their companies in shape or face closure.

The Avro team, under Charles

Ross Tieman reports on the improvement in fortunes
beckoning the troubled regional jet business

Masefield, its president, has achieved a great deal. With Peter Summerfield, a former Rover executive, applying motor industry manufacturing discipline as general manager, Masefield has closed the Hatfield assembly line in Hertfordshire and consolidated on a single site, Woodford, which costs only a tenth as much to run.

He has reduced the workforce from 7,000 to 2,400 and by developing integrated assembly stations and re-thinking the manufacturing process, the Avro team has cut the time and money needed to build each plane.

With redundancies, new attitudes and financial write-offs, Masefield and his team hope to have taken a dead-weight off the innovative talent in their business. Examples abound. Cockpit wiring looms are now assembled on jigs, tested, and installed complete, reducing both defects and time required. The time taken to build each plane has tumbled from 30 weeks to 18 next year the target is nine. Renegotiating contracts has reduced the price of bought-in components (half the \$25 million cost of each finished aircraft) by a third.

Benefits are not limited to Avro. Fabrication of the jetliner tail, which used to be done by Saab in Sweden, is now performed by Prestwick, which submitted the lowest bid for the work. This programme has gone hand in hand with a re-design of the aircraft to

produce the RJ series. Available in various lengths, the RJs can seat from 70 to 112 passengers and are far more carefully targeted at airline customers than their predecessor, the BAE 146.

Masefield and his colleagues are incensed by perceptions that the RJ is inferior to its two key rivals, the Fokker 100 made by Deutsche Aerospace and the Boeing 737-500. According to makers' figures, says Masefield, the RJ beats both on every key performance measure on operating distances of up to 300 miles — which amounts to 95 per cent of the target market.

The four-engine configuration cuts operating cost, take-off distance and noise, and allows access to city-centre airports from which rivals are barred. More than 250 BAE146/RJ series have been sold to 54 airlines. Even though the drive to maintain sales volumes at the expense of profits has been abandoned, Avro reckons to have secured 30 per cent of its market in 1993.

With production costs cut, development costs written off, and production running at a sustainable two a month, Avro is able to keep its head above water. "We are around break-even," Masefield says.

Summerfield, for his part, exudes a gritty optimism. "We have to marry the pace and energy of change of the automotive industry with the passion

for the product of people in aerospace," he says. "If we can, we are going to transform this industry." His point is crucial. Innovation in manufacturing techniques, not product, will be the benchmark of success in regional jets for the rest of the decade.

Things also seem to be going Avro's way in the market place. Airlines are becoming more specialised. International carriers are concentrating on long-distance routes with big passenger volumes. Feeder services are being taken over by cost-conscious specialist airlines that do not compromise profitability by buying multi-role planes. In 1991 and 1992, BAE146/RJ took half of all orders for regional jets. This year, despite targeting profit rather than volume, it took around a third.

Over the next 20 years, planemakers envisage a market for about 3,000 regional jets. On present evidence, there will be eight manufacturers competing for sales with up to 15 aircraft types. The cake is large, but if it is carved into so many slices no one will make a profit.

In Masefield's judgement, this danger will add to existing pressure on the industry for strategic alliances, particularly in the development of new aircraft. Aerospace, like the car industry, is learning the value of collaboration to share development costs and limit segmentation of markets.

With a highly capable, well-selling jet already in production, Avro believes it has good prospects of finding partners, especially to develop its pet project, the RJX. BAE will be ready to decide whether to proceed with this larger RJ derivative, entailing a new wing, by the end of 1994. But the company will only proceed if good partners give confidence that the product will be a money-spinner.

The "dream ticket" for any airplane maker would appear to be a manufacturing partnership spanning the three key world markets, the US, Europe and Pacific Asia. America's industry has scant experience of international collaboration. According to Masefield, it is the Europeans, and BAE in particular, that have an admirable record in cross-cultural manufacture.

Time will be the test of this thesis. Certainly, there is a ring of truth to the argument that BAE's failure to secure a deal with Taiwan reflects the latter's lack of industrial experience rather than Avro's shortcomings. Taiwan may yet return to the bargaining table, but it is likely to get a brisker reception. Cost-cutting has bought BAE time and it is starting to deliver orders. It may be a long haul, but Avro is on the way up.



Cockpit sections for Avro's RJ aircraft on the Woodford production line

Collaring cash for charity

CITY gets turned out in force yesterday to see Jenny Seagrove, the actress, auction a series of celebrity ties for charity. Lord Alexander of Weordon, Peter Wood of Direct Line and others from the world of finance and media chipped in towards the function, held for the second year at Jeeves of Belgrave in Londenham Market. More than £2,000 was raised for the charity Crisis at Christmas, with a hand-painted tie by Ralph Steadman going for the top price: £210. John Clee's offering went for £170, and a pair from Naim Attallah fetched £100. A late entry from Kevin Maxwell fetched £50. On the subject of fashion, Michael Stoddart, chairman of Electra Investment Trust and known as a snappy dresser, was presented at his company's recent Christmas party with the Hugo Boss Award for fashion sense — an embarrassing, since he is a director of Next. His other prize? A £10 Sketchley voucher.

Fall guy

WORD reaches me of a spectacular feat involving Norman McLeod, gentlemanly doyen

of the gilt-edged market's agency brokers. McLeod, who works for Secombe, Marshall & Campion Agency Brokers, was engaged in persuading an important client to deal in gilts when he fell off his chair. Flat on his back with telephone cable around his neck, he calmly proceeded to clinch the deal — to roars of approval from admiring colleagues.

Treasury moves

BIG changes at the Treasury, with two senior officials moving on as part of a wide-ranging shake-up. Huw Evans, in charge of economic forecast-

ing between 1980 and 1986, moves to Washington as the Economic Minister at the British Embassy, and Rachel Lomax, formerly deputy chief economic adviser, becomes head of the economic secretariat in the Cabinet Office. The Treasury is cutting out one layer of management at the top of its bureaucracy and reorganising its management structure into eight directorates, with more decision-making delegated down the ranks. The plan, which takes effect from January 24, appears to have been inspired by Sir Terence Burns, permanent secretary to the Treasury, but not

for the prime reason of cost savings. One Treasury official estimated that no more than £200,000 would be saved by the exercise.

Lottery king

COMPETITION among those hoping to run the National Lottery has taken a bizarre turn. No sooner had Richard Branson and Lord Young unveiled their contender, the Lottery Foundation, than observers were pointing with some amusement to the choice of logo — an "L" and an "F" against a dark background with a horse-shoe perched overhead. Some believe that the "F" in fact looks like a "K", unwittingly spelling out the initials of Branson's arch enemy, Lord King. And given the peer's love of horses and the hunt, the choice of horse-shoe provides more ammunition for the wags.

Discounted

MY fellow hack Tim Blackstone of the *Evening Standard* recently received a circular from Videotron, the London-based cable TV operator jointly owned by Cable and Wireless and Bell Canada, offering big discounts for new customers. Being naturally curious, Blackstone telephoned the

number given for more information, and, to his surprise, found that it just rang and rang. At this point, he contacted the Videotron press office, who informed him that the company had moved offices from Acton to Hammersmith, West London, but had forgotten to change the telephone number. Calls were going through to an empty room in the basement of the Kensington Hilton.

Oil be off

SG WARBURG is losing its top-rated oils team to Goldman Sachs. Peter Nicol and Rob Arnott join at the end of January, taking with them one of the most impressive pedigrees in the market.

Absent Santa

AT SELFREDGES, flagship store of Sears, it was not only the counter staff who were delayed by disruption on London trains and tubes yesterday. Children and parents queuing in Santa's grotto were told by assistants that Father Christmas had himself been delayed on the tube, and that normal service would be resumed as soon as the reindeers could get him to the store.

JON ASHWORTH

TEMPUS

Escaping gas

DURING the 18 months that British Gas has suffered in limbo, while first the MMC and then the Department of Trade debated its future, the main concern for its 2 million shareholders has been the future of the dividend. Since the group's cover is only 1.5 times, there seemed a real threat that rough regulatory treatment could make it the first regulated utility where dividends would stagnate or even decline.

Yesterday's statement from Michael Heseltine might not settle all the doubts about British Gas's future, but it removes much of the long-standing uncertainty, leaving the group in one place but exposing it to the harsh world of competition by 1998.

The main unanswered question is over the future of British Gas's pricing formula, currently RPI minus 5, but Cedric Brown

sounds confident it will be relaxed, as he wanted. This will slow the fall in gas prices in the short term, providing the funds to pay for reorganisation and accelerate the group's diversification into exploration, production and overseas operations.

After 1996, British Gas's turnover in the tariff and contract market will certainly slip with the onset of competition, but the group's plans for 20,000 job losses will by then have cut costs by £600 million a year and offset much of the pressure on profits.

This all makes the dividend look very secure, which British Gas may emphasise with a modest increase to 15p at year-end. This would put the shares on a yield of 5.4 per cent, a 50 per cent premium to the market, which looks attractive, particularly for yield investors.

Williams

WILLIAMS Holdings has spent years trying to convince the City that it wants to be a focused building products and fire protection group, so its sale of a ragbag of peripheral engineering businesses is hardly shocking.

More surprising are the easy terms of the sale. At £40.3 million, the Cortworth management buy-out is acquiring the businesses on an exit p/e ratio of only 12, while Williams is providing more than a third of the finance. At least it has retained the right to up to a quarter of Cortworth's equity, to provide an extra kicker if all goes well.

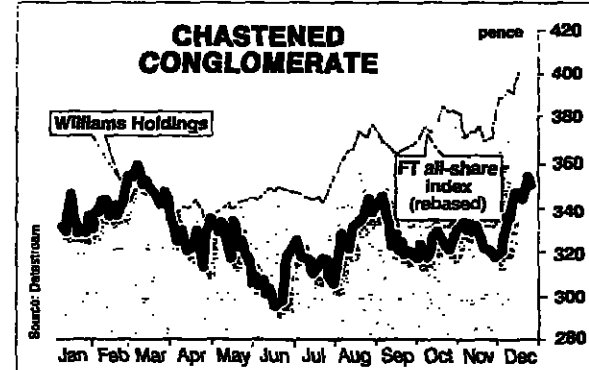
Williams is dreaming of global reach in its selected markets and is keen to be rid of a collection of smaller businesses that were consuming management time and resources. The group

would like also to sell its electrical division, but as this supplies the German motor market, the disposal is likely to be delayed until a recovery in 1995 or later.

After the sale of Cortworth, gearing at Williams should be less than 40 per cent, which is modest given the goodwill the group has written off over the years. The

group looks poised for an overseas acquisition soon.

The sale of Cortworth will cut £2 million from profits next year, which leaves the shares on a p/e ratio of 16. That looks less expensive than many, particularly if the market finally accepts Williams's self-image as a home products group rather than scatter-gun conglomerate.



Wessex Water

WATER companies cannot hope to match the payouts of their electricity brethren in the recent round of interim figures but, by leading the field in its own category, Wessex raises questions about its long-term payout rate.

Wessex is already earning 8 per cent of profits from its joint venture waste management business, an achievement that makes its ambitions in that area more credible than most of its peers. The joint venture route with an established waste company adds management expertise, an element missing from recent water company diversifications.

But Wessex is under more pressure than others. Having asked shareholders to finance the expansion in a rights issue in January, it needs to show a return, given the depressed outlook for the core water and sewerage business. At the same time, the group's higher rate of dividend growth puts further emphasis on expansion. Wessex shares are trading on a forecast dividend yield of 4 per cent assuming a payout

of 23p for the full year. That is barely ahead of the yield on the market as a whole, even taking into account the expectation of lower base rates. Wessex shares are demanding a lot of brass from muck.

Standard Chartered

THE publication of a harshly worded report from the Indian authorities on last year's Bombay stock market scam gave Standard Chartered's shares a rare setback yesterday. Its shareholders can hardly complain, since the shares, at 117p, are still 105 per cent up on their low point for the year, beating the rest of the hyperactive financial sector by a long margin.

Standard's shares have partly been driven by the performance of the Hong Kong stock market, but they have also been pushed along by a general reappraisal of the potential of its south-east Asian operations. West markets have been dominated by Sinomania all year and Standard is the largest foreign bank in China.

At this price, the market is expecting a lot from Standard. For a start it implies that the bank's strengthened financial base can prevent disasters like the Bombay affair. It also implies rapid growth in profits and dividends, since the historic yield is now barely 2.2 per cent.

Standard is undoubtedly a more tightly managed, profit-orientated organisation than it was five years ago. But it is hard to see how it can plug all the potential holes in its diverse network. As a result it should trade at a discount to the sector, not a premium.

Investors also seem to have forgotten that the shares are overshadowed by two large stakes, the 15 per cent held by Khoo Teck Puat and the 5 per cent in Lloyds Bank's hands. Both holders are now showing large profits and could be persuaded to sell.

The bid talk about Standard has never entirely gone away, and this may be the other reason for the share price. But any bidder is unlikely to pay the current premium. In the absence of a generous offer the shares look top-heavy.

ABBEE NATIONAL INTEREST RATES

Change of Interest Rates

With effect from 24th December 1993 the rates of interest listed below will apply to savings and investment accounts currently available.

	New Annual Interest Rates		New Monthly Interest Rates	
	Gross % Rate A	Net % Rate AA	Gross % Rate A	Net % Rate AA
ABBEE NATIONAL HIGH YIELD BOND				
£200,000 plus	7.65	5.74	7.39	5.54
£100,000 up to £199,999	7.50	5.63	7.25	5.44
£50,000 up to £99,999	7.25	5.44	7.02	5.27
£25,000 up to £49,999	7.00	5.25	6.78	5.09
£10,000 up to £24,999	6.10	4.58	5.94	4.46
ABBEE NATIONAL INVESTMENT ACCOUNT				
£25,000 plus	6.15	4.61	5.98	4.49
£10,000 up to £24,999	5.40	4.05	5.27	3.95
£500 up to £9,999	4.25	3.19	4.17	3.13
TESSA: Second Edition*				
£6,600 plus	6.40	—	—	—
£4,800 up to £6,599	6.30	—	—	—
£3,000 up to £4,799	6.20	—	—	—
£1 up to £2,999	6.00	—	—	—
REGULAR SAVER†				
£75,000 plus	7.00	5.25	—	—
£10,000 up to £74,999	6.60	4.95	—	—
£5,000 up to £9,999	5.80	4.35	—	—
£2,500 up to £4,999	5.10	3.83	—	—
£500 up to £2,499	4.90	3.68	—	—
£1 up to £499	3.50	2.63	—	—
INSTANT SAVER				
£25,000 plus	5.10	3.83	—	—
£10,000 up to £24,999	4.50	3.38	—	—
£5,000 up to £9,999	4.15	3.11	—	—
£2,500 up to £4,999	4.00	3.00	—	—
£500 up to £2,499	3.80	2.85	—	—
£1 up to £499	0.50	0.38	—	—
CURRENT ACCOUNT				
	—	—	0.50	0.38
HIGH INTEREST CHEQUE ACCOUNT				
£25,000 plus	4.00	3.00	3.93	2.95
£10,000 up to £24,999	3.25	2.44	3.20	2.40
£2,500 up to £9,999	2.20	1.65	2.18	1.64
£1,000 up to £2,499	1.20	0.90	1.19	0.89
OTHER ACCOUNTS				
Interest rates on investment accounts no longer available and not listed are obtainable from your local branch.				
* Interest will be paid gross to eligible non-tax payers who register with us as required by the Inland Revenue.				
† Tax free return under current legislation. * Rates quoted include 3.00% gross p.a. bonus or 2.25% net p.a. bonus. See product leaflet for full terms and conditions.				

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Shares pause for breath

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings began December 13. Dealings end December 31. Settlement day January 4. Settlement day is calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

BANKS, DISCOUNT, HP

High	Low	Company	Price	Yld	P/E
487	487	ABN AMRO	487	4.1	13.1
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DRAPERY, STORES

High	Low	Company	Price	Yld	P/E
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FINANCIAL TRUSTS

High	Low	Company	Price	Yld	P/E
487	487	ABN AMRO	487	4.1	13.1
487	487	ABN AMRO	487	4.1	13.1
487	487	ABN AMRO	487	4.1	13.1
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FOODS

High	Low	Company	Price	Yld	P/E
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BREWERS

High	Low	Company	Price	Yld	P/E
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BUILDING, ROADS

High	Low	Company	Price	Yld	P/E
487	487	ABN AMRO	487	4.1	13.1
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ELECTRICALS

High	Low	Company	Price	Yld	P/E
487	487	ABN AMRO	487	4.1	13.1
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HOTELS, CATERERS

High	Low	Company	Price	Yld	P/E
487	487	ABN AMRO	487	4.1	13.1
487	487	ABN AMRO	487	4.1	13.1
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INDUSTRIALS

High	Low	Company	Price	Yld	P/E
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BUSINESS SERVICES

High	Low	Company	Price	Yld	P/E
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ELECTRICITY

High	Low	Company	Price	Yld	P/E
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FINANCE, LAND

High	Low	Company	Price	Yld	P/E
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CHEMICALS, PLASTICS

High	Low	Company	Price	Yld	P/E
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BRITISH FUNDS

High	Low	Company	Price	Yld	P/E
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LEISURE

High	Low	Company	Price	Yld	P/E
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PROPERTY

High	Low	Company	Price	Yld	P/E
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487	487	ABN AMRO	487	4.1	13.1
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MINING

High	Low	Company	Price	Yld	P/E
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BBC's *Birds of a Feather* with, left, Linda Robson, Lesley Joseph and Pauline Quirke against *Field of Dreams* with Amy Madigan, Kevin Costner, Gaby Hoffman



The big Christmas ratings war

ITV will not be too bothered if it loses the seasonal ratings battle, so long as it keeps its overall lead, says Peter Barnard

Alan Yentob is dreaming of a Christmas, while-out-and-provisional figures towards the end of next week are nearly certain, to prove that the BBC's controller's dream has come true... with more than a little help from the Queen.

The battle of Christmas Day appears destined to be another valley of death for ITV, which is all rather odd. ITV is supposed to be the natural home of mass-audience scheduling, yet the BBC's victories of recent years have led to the belief that the commercial channel has thrown in the towel.

If so, nobody at ITV is saying it and nobody at the BBC is inclined to believe it. Especially not this year. With Christmas Day falling on a Saturday, London Weekend Television is the key ITV player and that means Greg Dyke, its aggressive chief executive. "There is no way Greg is going to give up on Christmas," says Mr Yentob. "With three film premieres on Christmas night, he is clearly competing pretty heavily."

Nonetheless, last year BBC1 had the four highest Christmas Day audiences and numbers one, two and four in the schedule again this year (number three was a film). *Only Fools and Horses* (20.1 million), *Birds of a Feather* (16.9 million) and *EastEnders* (15.1 million) helped the channel's audience share to reach 53.1 per cent against only 29.4 for ITV. Add the minority channels and the BBC took 61.4 per cent.

Three factors are cited for making the BBC pre-eminent, some more convincing than others. One, the BBC focuses especially on Christmas specials of programmes such as *Only Fools and Horses*. Two, audiences tend to watch the BBC on "traditional" occasions. And there is the view that ITV are not really in the hunt.

"That's very dubious," says Katherine Kelly, a Kleinwort Benson media analyst. "ITV can't afford to concede a single viewer for a single second. It must be that they aren't getting the offering right, although they are certainly hampered in more ways than one by people traditionally turning to the BBC."

Enter the Queen. There is agreement that peak viewing on normal days means 6.30 to 10.30, but on Christmas Day the peak starts at 3pm with Her Majesty's Christmas message. This goes out on BBC1 and ITV simultaneously but on past form the 20 million audience will split about 12 million to 8 million in favour of the BBC.

"That provides a very solid platform for the rest of the day," says Ms Kelly. "More than on any other day, people tend to build their

day around television viewing. They will even time lunch to fit in." There is some merit in the argument that, commercially, ITV is not really fired up for Christmas Day. Most commercials are for holidays and post-Christmas sales and advertisers know that the viewers are likely to be suffering from retail exhaustion.

But from an objective point of

view, this argument has the ring of an unspoken excuse rather than a reason. In the jargon, Christmas Day offers a unique opportunity to "hook" viewers at a time when the audience as a whole is at its biggest and, perhaps, least critical, the consumption of food and drink giving television a gloss.

On last year's figures, viewers will spend an average of five hours 46 minutes in front of the box on Christmas Day and 33 hours viewing throughout Christmas week, five hours more than in other weeks. This suggests there is enormous potential to increase the regular, loyal audience for a network, although ITV can take comfort from the fact that for the rest of the year it stays ahead of the BBC.

One thing demonstrated by Christmas viewing is that the shared experience of television is not dead, merely dormant. Before the birth of ITV in 1955, there was one BBC channel so that whatever it transmitted would be a focus for conversation the next morning. The multi-channel society fragmented the audience but the combination of extended families coming together for Christmas and the commensurately bigger audience for blockbuster programmes

means that on Boxing Day you are pressed to find anyone who has not watched *Only Fools and Horses*. This year's crucial Christmas-night junction will be at 8 o'clock when ITV starts its biggest film, the Kevin Costner-starring *Field of Dreams* and BBC1 offers an hour-long *Birds of a Feather* special.

If the BBC wins at 8pm, its philosophy of backing mostly home-grown entertainment for the broadest age range will again be

vindicated. Mr Yentob believes the audience will go for comedy followed by the big film, *Ghost*, at 9.10, rather than sacrificing *Birds of a Feather* and most of *Ghost* in order to see *Field of Dreams* on ITV.

Indeed, films may be a diminishing asset. There are 700 on all channels, including BSkyB, during the Christmas fortnight and, with Sky's Movie Channel attracting subscriptions from the socio-economic groups that would otherwise depend on ITV, the latter may be finding a film-orientated schedule subject to the law of diminishing returns.

Mr Yentob is certainly confident without being complacent. "We work very hard to schedule in a way that will not only attract audiences but be a kind of message to the public about the nature of the BBC," he says. "Complementary scheduling between BBC1 and BBC2 is an important part of that and if you look at our schedules as a whole you can see some of the emblems of why the BBC exists. Films are very much a part of the Christmas schedule but we don't like them to dominate. We want a range of programming that will appeal to the full range of viewers."

On last year's evidence, the BBC achieves that objective. It would be silly to say that ITV doesn't care, but insiders there are not too vexed if the BBC has its Christmas (ratings) Day... provided ITV still leads for the rest of the year.

Travel agents square up

The biggest retail rebranding in ten years is about to take off

Traditionally, it has been kept at arm's length. But that may change. In the past year, owners of such brands as Falcon, Sovereign, Enterprise and Sun Med, have linked with Thomas Cook's 340-strong chain, and Air Tours has bought Pickfords Travel and Hogg

and travel agency. Consumers may not be so happy, however. All the "vertically integrated" retail chains are currently committed to providing choice by selling a range of holidays from a range of companies. But large tour operators have a vested interest in using their travel agencies to push their own products. Smaller operators live in fear of their brochures being "de-ranked", the critics point out. Even if they are not, travel shop staff are being given incentives to sell some holidays harder than others — because the supplier offers higher commission.

That means that holiday makers may end up not with the best holiday, but with the one that makes most profit for their travel agent. It is fears such as these that have prompted the Office of Fair Trading to investigate tour operators' potential abuse of their distribution power.

It doesn't need to worry, says Kevin Welch, Going Places marketing director. "There is a better balance of power now. The rise of vertical integration, has meant less competition from three major companies, all of which have significant market clout. Lunn Poly aren't having their own way any more."

ALAN MITCHELL



Lunn Poly: facing competition

Robinson — the subject of this week's hugely extensive name change.

The ripples from such initiatives are only now being felt. According to Steve Baynard, Going Places managing director, "Thomson has begun to flex its muscles. Some tour operators could soon find their products not stocked by Lunn Poly". Going Places is a way of securing distribution for Air Tours holidays. And, he adds: "We also want to make a profit at each stage, tour operating, airlines."

prompted the Office of Fair Trading to investigate tour operators' potential abuse of their distribution power. It doesn't need to worry, says Kevin Welch, Going Places marketing director. "There is a better balance of power now. The rise of vertical integration, has meant less competition from three major companies, all of which have significant market clout. Lunn Poly aren't having their own way any more."

ALAN MITCHELL

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square up

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rebranding
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is about to
take off

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transition from classic
movie to stage musical

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Anne-Marie Owens
triumphs in a new
staging of Smetana's
The Two Widows

ARTS

Why Botham is on at the nursery end

England cricket heroes, soap stars, Page 3 lovelies... these are all grist to the pantomime mill. Peter Barnard discovers the reasons

So you're sitting in the front stalls amid a mayhem of infants and you're thinking: who writes this stuff? You will get scant enlightenment from the programme and not just because it has been turned into a paper aeroplane and launched at the upper circle. Pantomime writers are unsung, but are they complaining? Oh no they're not.

Anyone can write a pantomime... can't they? The first thing to do is submit some dialogue to a likely impresario. This needs to contain a joke, a famous name and something that enables the audience to take sides. Try this:

1st clown: "Ian Botham's in pantomime at Bath."
2nd clown: "I didn't know he still played for Somerset."
Audience: "Oh no he doesn't."

Pantomime, the best of which contrives to be traditional and modern at the same time, is a curious creature. Part melodrama, part farce, part musical, it has become a vehicle for television sitcom stars and over-the-top athletes, mid-winter being a slack time for both.

This trend presents writers with an interesting challenge. Not only are they faced with writing for people who are unfamiliar with the genre and the stage, which can apply to comedians and television actors as much as to sportsmen, but also an audience expecting that someone advertised on the billboards as "Dot Cotton from EastEnders" will behave like Dot Cotton from EastEnders.

This is not easy if she is playing the Fairy in *Dick Whittington*, which is what June Brown (aka Cotton) is doing — alongside Botham at Bath's Theatre Royal this season. A hundred miles away at the Hippodrome in Birmingham, Lesley Joseph ("Dorrie in *Birds of a Feather*") is playing... the Fairy in *Dick Whittington*.

The Hippodrome version has five writers, one of whom is Keith Simmonds, who is also half of a comedy act called the Simmonds Brothers. Simmonds also wrote the Bath *Dick Whittington*. But the

Bath Fairy and the Birmingham Fairy are birds of a very different feather.

"You have to make them reflect their television personas," Simmonds says, "while at the same time ensuring that they serve the same function within the story. An audience familiar with Dot will want a bit of that character whereas an audience that loves Dorrie will want to feel they are getting a bit of that character."

This leads to wholesale dialogue changes and can alter the attitude of the audience to the character. Cotton is a sympathetic, caring person whereas Dorrie is self-centred and cutting (not to say sex mad). Therefore in Birmingham the Fairy will answer an appeal for help with something like: "Oh, dear, I do hope I can do some good here." Whereas in Bath the Fairy will respond: "For goodness sake, I've not got a minute to myself."

Simmonds, whose country-wide writing credits this season include three *Dick Whittingtons* and two *Aladdins* — as well as appearing with his brother at the Hippodrome — believes that using sitcom actors and sports stars is a development of pantomime's traditions.

"A lot of actors are against bringing these people in, but if they put bums on seats and keep theatres open I'm all for it. And I do find these people take it very seriously; they're often more committed to it than the seasoned performers."

"A sports star knows he has something to prove, he knows there are people willing to bet on him, and it's the job of the writer to make sure he is comfortable in the part. If you take someone like Ian, a man who is famous for action, you give him lots of physical jokes rather than big chunks of dialogue."

Tudor Davies is one of the leading lights in pantomime production and writing. This

year he has four *Aladdins*, three *Dick Whittingtons* and a *Mother Goose* on the go. He rebuts the idea that adapting pantomime to fit in with imported stars goes against tradition.

"Pantomime started out with a troupe of Italian clowns, a mime act," he says. "They would work their way around Europe and happened to end up in England around Christmas time. But it was all very twice and in about 1840 someone had the idea of bringing in music hall stars. There was uproar in the business but the people loved it, they packed the theatres."

Davies does not agree entirely with Simmonds about having sitcom characters invade pantomime. "I'm all for them appearing, but some of them resist replicating their television parts. I'm an actor in my own right; they'll say. Others will go part of the way. For example, if you write a part for Vicki Michelle from *Allo, Allo* she will do the line: 'I'll say this only once,' but she stops short of doing it in a French accent."

Davies' pantomimes this year involve stars as diverse as "Dame" Hilda Brackett, Rolf Harris, Bonnie Langford and Little and Large. He says: "You have Little and Large starring in *Jack and the Beanstalk* but they can't play Jack because people expect to see them as a pair, not in unrelated parts. So you make them King Crompton and his jester, which involves building up those roles. They have to go with Jack up the beanstalk, for instance, otherwise they wouldn't be in the second act. "But none of this needs to compromise the basic story. It's like a well-made suit. You take a Savile Row suit to a tailor and he can make alterations because the quality material is there."

Pantomime writers need to be thick-skinned. Most of

them get asked to accept suggestions tossed in by performers and they usually do. "The worst people to write for," Davies says, "are the ones who have done a couple of shows and think they know what panto is. Usually they don't. But experienced people will make suggestions that work for them."

Beyond the ranks of established actors, sitcom incoherents and sports stars comes a fourth category, the body beautiful: a Page 3 girl or a starlet in search of a start. Bodies beautiful, with a few exceptions, have in common the fact that they can't actually do much. One writer recalls a beauty (no names, no backstage passes) for whom writing anything would have been a tragic waste of words. So at one point in the script there appeared the words "dance routine". Not that this beauty could dance, either, so two male dancers were brought in for a routine involving the men dancing like crazy but the beauty standing in the middle of the stage looking... beautiful. Afterwards people came up to the producer and said: "I had no idea she was such a good dancer."

Which is where pantomime and the mainstream theatre overlap: an illusion has been created and for the audience it becomes reality. And however much pantomime changes to accommodate cricketers, television stars, comedians and crumpet, there is a limit. For Paul Elliott, who has written or produced 150 pantomimes since 1969, the limit has a name: Derek Hatton.

Someone told Elliott that Hatton would make a lovely King Rat but Elliott said no he wouldn't. "I just find his image very strange. I'm all for mixing media in pantomime, but there are some people who just seem wrong."

What seems right to Elliott is that in writing a pantomime you are helping to write a future for the entire business. "A pantomime is usually the first time a kid sees the inside of a theatre. We have to make sure it isn't the last."



Ian Botham points the way to Lord's and the Oval, while remaining firmly in Bath, and his role in *Dick Whittington*



Every inch the rock star, Andrew Eldritch lays on the doom with the Sisters of Mercy

HERDS of cattle had died to clothe the leathers that poured into the Brixton Academy to welcome the Sisters of Mercy back to London. And it was easy — in some perverse way — to understand why. Sisters gigs are rare occurrences these days and every outing made by their founding vocalist Andrew Eldritch is treated by their fans with glee and gravitas mixed in equal amounts.

Rock music has few personalities capable of commanding such allegiance and Eldritch projects a powerful, sensuous presence that is similarly rare. After numerous and well-publicised personnel changes, the Sisters of Mercy have settled comfortably into a three-piece: guitarists Andreas Bruhn, Adam Pearson and Eldritch (along with the ubiquitous Doktor Avalanche, a drum-and-bass machine, and, on this occasion, an added female keyboard player).

Eldritch has a showman's understanding of crowds and he works hard at maintaining a mysterious, fantastic facade.

ROCK
Sisters under the skin
Sisters of Mercy
Brixton Academy

Clouds of smoke and blue stabbing lights covered the stage, parting every so often to reveal a live figure with cheese-grater cheekbones and dark glasses — a veritable sex god — huddled over a microphone.

Pink Floyd's "Comfortably Numb" was the opening number and its guitar lines, floating over a gigantic rhythm, set the concert's mood. For performance purposes, Eldritch has disguised his natural tenor

voice with a growling, elemental bass and — considering he had flu — it was lucky that he lasted a full set and two encores. The material ranged from early 1980s hits ("Alice", "Some Kind of Stranger" and "Amphetamine Logic") through "Flood II" and the magnificent "On the Wire" to their latest single, "Under the Gun".

The Sisters in full flight are (to reclaim a word from the Californians) an awesome experience. Doktor Avalanche's digital heart thumped with an industrial beat and, between Eldritch and the spiky, wailing guitars, the sound was lean and muscular.

After a singalong "This Corrosion", Eldritch dissolved into the darkening fog. It rolled back to allow encores which included "First and Last and Always" and, finally, a speeding version of "Temple of Love". A monumental, triumphant return and quite possibly the best Christmas gift for many people present.

LOUISE GRAY

The excellent American actor and director Sam Wanamaker was to be heard performing in a Radio 3 play on the day that he died. It was a pity that the play — or "dramatic poem" — *The Sandbar*, which was broadcast on Saturday night, was not a better piece of work.

Written by Robert Berke, an American living in London, it conjured up a stretch of the Georgia coastline where a sandbar out at sea was a resting-place for gulls and other seabirds. The monologues of three people who lived along the coast kept circling back to the sandbar, which haunted them with its promise of peace in life, or peace after death.

Unfortunately their reflections on the trials and tribulations of their lives were commonplace in the extreme, and no evocative background of breaking waves — even though the BBC had actually gone to Georgia to record them — could make up for that. Ed, for instance — the Wanamaker part — was dying of cancer, but just rambled on about smoking too much and missing

RADIO Not with a bang, but a whimper

his friends. Even the recurring image of the sandbar was really rather flaccid. Tennyson's idea of death as "crossing the bar" was distinctly more sturdy.

An intriguing programme on Radio 4 went to the other side of America. Talking to Trees (Thursday) was about the tallest living things in the world, "the cloak of redwood trees that enfold the Californian coastal range", in the words of Chris Barias, who was wandering under them with a microphone.

He talked to a woman tree expert who lived so close to her giant charges

she felt she would never get back to the real world, and didn't mind; and to boy scouts who were undergoing their rites of passage in the redwood forest and prided themselves on being "zero-impact campers" — i.e. they left no mess.

There were loggers who complained that the "tree-huggers" were trying to put them out of a job, and had painted the slogan "If you're out of work eat an environmentalist" on their trucks.

Barias himself was very responsive to the beauty and grandeur of the trees, but he kept his head, and came up with what seemed a reasonable conclusion:

if the Californians wanted to keep their romantic forest, they would have to be realistic, and work out a proper programme of controlled felling and regrowth.

But he clearly had a soft spot for the biologist who lived under the trees in a house he had built himself, and sent out green campaigning bulletins on a solar-powered fax machine.

On Your Mark on Sunday morning (Radio 4) went to the Scotland to find a scene where wild beauty already goes hand in hand with commercial realism. A herd of reindeer wanders on the slopes of the Cairngorms, affectionately tended by a Scotsman and his wife from Hertfordshire.

However, happy though they are up there, the couple make their living by taking the docile beasts to business promotions, children's parties and hospital wards. Any red noses? No, but the reindeer have delightfully furry noses — if they were wet noses, they would freeze.

DERWENT MAY

Everything that's Ella

A ample column inches were devoted to the compilations celebrating Ella Fitzgerald's 75th birthday this year. The party was only slightly marred by the revelation, in Stuart Nicholson's new biography, that she had cut a year from her true age.

No apologies for returning to the subject of the First Lady, now that we can feast upon the year's most spectacular re-issue. A 16-disc box set, *The Complete Ella Fitzgerald Song Books* (Verve 314-519-832-3) is a magnificently packaged collection of the ground-breaking albums inspired by the masters of American song.

Budget-conscious listeners, incidentally, can opt for a single-disc sampler *The Best of the Song Books* (Verve 519804).

Guided by the impresario Norman Granz, Fitzgerald embarked on the project in 1956 with two volumes of Cole Porter songs, some evergreen, some almost forgotten.

A Rodgers and Hart tribute followed, before Fitzgerald and her arrangers moved on

to the work of Duke Ellington, Irving Berlin, George and Ira Gershwin, Harold Arlen, Jerome Kern and finally, in 1964, Johnny Mercer.

The overwhelming success of the Porter collection put Fitzgerald's erratic career back on course, helping her to break through to a huge non-jazz audience. Some of the other sets — notably the five-LP Gershwin set (here transferred on to three CDs) — were much less lucrative, fuelled more by Granz's love of the canon than purely commercial considerations.

The three discs of Ellington are another delight, marked by a loose, occasionally even ragged ambience and the bonus of some moody small-group performances.

Bizet

CARMEN

BENJIE GRAVES IS SEXY, DAZZLING AND SEDUCTIVE... SHE HAS STAKED HER CLAIM TO THE TITLE ROLE

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2 FEBRUARY AT 7PM

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE
Covent Garden

CLIVE DAVIS

LONDON

CHRISTMAS CAROL: Rob Inglis has adapted Dickens's version for public performance for his own one-man show, and then added Dylan Thomas's poetic re-imaginings of a Christmas carol. A piece from a well-known solo performer, for age eight upwards.

THEATRE MUSEUM: Covent Garden, plus Dec 28-31, Jan 2. All at 2pm.

THE NUTCRACKER: A straightforward and attractive version of Tchaikovsky's perennial favourite from Ben Stevenson for English National Ballet. The real clincher, though, is the absolutely delicious Kingdom of the Sweets sequence.

FEAST: Heston, South Bank, SE1 (071-038 8800). Tonight, 7.30pm. Thurs, 2.30 and 7.30pm. Fri, 2.30pm. Dec 27-31, 2.30 and 7.30pm.

ELSEWHERE

NORTHWICH: Two very different Puppet Theatre productions offer a refreshing change of pace. The historic puppet master casts the dragon to save his kingdom and win the princess in Dragon's Head. Based on a Spanish play, performed with live music, it has a wily underlying satire to entertain adults as well. The classic Jack and the

TODAY'S EVENTS

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Kris Anderson

BARONET: A speciality for children aged three to seven.

Puppet Theatre: St James, Westminster, (0800 28921) Dragon Today and Thurs, 2.30pm and 7.30pm. Dec 24, 27, Jan 1, 2.30pm; Dec 26, 28, 30, 2.30 and 7.30pm. Jack Today, Dec 28, 29, 11am and 3pm; Dec 28, 27, Jan 2, 3pm. Unit 16, 6.

PORTSMOUTH: The final timber has been restored back into the hull of Henry VIII's great warship the Mary Rose and to celebrate, the Dockyard is offering free admission to children under 16 during the Christmas season. Must be accompanied by an adult.

DOCKYARD: (0705 750521). Daily, except Dec 25, from 10am. Last ticket sold at 4.30pm. Offer available until Jan 5.

SHEPHERD: Opening day for Tommy Connor, Scotty Bell, Carlos Derris and Cheryl Taylor in one of the most favourite pantos of all, Cinderella. Lyceum, Norfolk Street (0742 769922).

THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre showing in London

House full, returns only
Some seats available
Seats at all prices

ASPECTS OF LOVE: Andrew Lloyd Webber now has his musical running smoothly as the one return for a short revival. Not one of the best. **Palace Theatre, Covent Garden, WC2 (071-038 5572).** Mon-Sat, 7.45pm; mat: Wed and Sat, 3pm. Dec 24, 3pm only. Unit 19, 16.

CLYDE BIRD: David Hare's Big Friendly Giant makes his now seasonally festive call on London. **St Martin's Lane, WC2 (071-067 1119).** Mon 7pm; Tue-Fri, 2pm and 7pm; Sat 11am, 2.30pm, 7pm. Dec 24: 11am and 2.30pm only.

CAROUSEL: Tunes and cleverly written lyrics and a touching and familiar mixture of the percussive and the melodramatic. **Shakespeare Theatre, WC2 (071-379 5599).** Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat: Wed, Sat, 2.30pm. Dec 24, 2.30pm only.

FOREVER PLAIN: General and witty performed homage to the four-part harmony groups of the 1950s. **Arts Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1 (071-404 5070).** Mon-Thurs, 8pm; Fri, Sat, 8.30pm; mat: Fri, Sat, 2pm. Dec 24: 2pm only. Dec 27 and 28, 8pm and 8.30pm.

AN INSPECTOR CALLS: Stephen Daldry's meticulously re-imagined version of Agatha Christie's novel. **Adelphi Theatre, WC2 (071-038 6404).** Mon-Fri, 7.45pm; Sat, 8pm and 10pm; mat: Wed, 2.30pm. No post Dec 27.

THE MICE AND THE MAN: O'Rourke. Music and lyrics in a wondrously light-hearted play about a man and his mice. **Adelphi Theatre, WC2 (071-038 6404).** Mon-Fri, 7.45pm; Sat, 8pm and 10pm; mat: Wed, 2.30pm. No post Dec 27.

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CINEMA GUIDE

Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London and (where indicated with the symbol *) on release across the country

THE METEOR MAN (PG): Tim Washington teacher turns superhero and cleans up the community. **Blitz, Leicester Square, WC2 (071-038 6404).** Mon-Fri, 7.45pm; Sat, 8pm and 10pm; mat: Wed, 2.30pm. No post Dec 27.

ROBIN HOOD: MEN IN TIGHTS (PG): Unlikely, outlandish, spoofed. **Forest of Dean, Forest of Dean, Wiltshire, BA20 2JN. Mon-Fri, 7.45pm; Sat, 8pm and 10pm; mat: Wed, 2.30pm. No post Dec 27.**

ADAM'S FAMILY VALUES (PG): A new comedy about a family who move into a new house and find out that the house is haunted. **Adelphi Theatre, WC2 (071-038 6404).** Mon-Fri, 7.45pm; Sat, 8pm and 10pm; mat: Wed, 2.30pm. No post Dec 27.

THE CONJURER (PG): Trials and tribulations of an ambitious concept in a new film. **Adelphi Theatre, WC2 (071-038 6404).** Mon-Fri, 7.45pm; Sat, 8pm and 10pm; mat: Wed, 2.30pm. No post Dec 27.

THE CONJURER (PG): Trials and tribulations of an ambitious concept in a new film. **Adelphi Theatre, WC2 (071-038 6404).** Mon-Fri, 7.45pm; Sat, 8pm and 10pm; mat: Wed, 2.30pm. No post Dec 27.

CHRISTMAS SHOWS: A fine National Youth Music Theatre staging; and contrasting pantos

Timeless fable freshly minted

Whistle Down the Wind

Lilian Baylis

FEW Christmas shows attain the sentimental delicacy of this delightful tale from the National Youth Music Theatre. It is a touching evocation of childhood innocence and adult mendacity that loses nothing in its move from cinema — Bryan Forbes's celebrated 1961 film, with Hayley Mills and Alan Bates — to theatre. As he watched Monday's performance, perhaps Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber (the NYMT's sponsor) pondered how some classic movies translate naturally into stage musicals, and some don't.

In the minds of the children in a 1950s Lancashire village, the fugitive murderer hiding in the barn is none other than Jesus Christ, making his Second Coming. As they protect him against the authorities and their own mean-spirited and vindictive parents, the story acquires a familiar ring.

One child is bullied by the village thug until he makes a threefold denial that the fugitive is Jesus (a school-bell rings, rather than a cock crowing). Twelve of the children have a last supper with the villain, then comes a betrayal, a torchlit manhunt, and a kind of crucifixion. The children's faith is revealed, paradoxically, both as a delusion and as a state of grace which the adults, for all their church-going and rule-making, cannot enter.

All this might easily degenerate into cringe-inducing whimsy. But the superb 1961 screenplay by Willis Hall and Keith Waterhouse — largely retained by the present adapters, Russell Labey and Richard Taylor — is grounded in the salty humour and commonplaces of Lancashire. And in Labey's NYMT production the playing is so full of pungent wit that the potential for preciousness is purged.

Lucy-Anne Bradshaw — admirably assured in voice and demeanour as the oldest child, despite suffering from a snuffle — rightly dominates the show. Excellent performances also come from Helen Power as her younger sister, Andrew Buckley as her



Innocent belief: Helen Power, Lucy-Anne Bradshaw and Andrew Buckley in *Whistle Down the Wind*

Clithere Kid of a brother, and Tim Godwin as a gruff and anguished fugitive. But perhaps the most impressive aspect is the NYMT's strength in depth, with classy careers right down the line, and some crisp ensemble work where scenes are played, and sung simultaneously.

Taylor's music flows seamlessly

under the speech and into the songs, which are either ballads in the sweetly diatonic mode of Sir Andrew himself, or quicker, story-telling efforts that tuck many words neatly into the vocal line. Taylor himself directs eight instrumentalists whose strings-and-woodwind sonorities greatly add to the mystical mood.

A number called "Funny, It Doesn't Seem Strange" comes straight out of the "Send in the Clowns" school of songs in which Characters Explore Their Feelings. Otherwise, the score has a remarkable freshness. The show runs until January 2.

RICHARD MORRISON

Aesthetically challenged

The Ugly Duckling

Watermill, Bagnor

IN THIS musical panto not a human character is in view. At one point in the story an old woman is heard, and in another episode the hero is caught in a fishing net and we hear his owner cackling. Other than these two unseen speakers, we hear only from the animals, and that's original.

Francis O'Connor's raked stage makes it possible for some creatures to make their entrances from below. The ducklings emerge from the depths of their egg-box nest; Cat, the excellent punk villain of the piece, disappears into the stepwell he had intended for a Bullfrog (Stephen Aintree) clammers from under a lilypond.

Based on the Hans Andersen tale, the story is subtitled "The Aesthetically Challenged Farmyard Fowl". The fowl is played by Craig Purnell, an actor still at drama school but physically right. He is either oddly shaped or has been padded to look so, and his face wears the dismayed look of someone who doesn't understand why neighbours laugh at him.

Because five-year-olds will be in the audience there is only so much emphasis on isolation that Anthony Drewe's book and lyrics allow before Howard Samuel's hungry cat — "Hello, Duck!" — sinks in to risk another of his nine lives. Yet Drewe does not shirk the nature of alienation: "Different isn't naughty/Different isn't bad/So why should being different/Make me sad?"

Fortunately for Ugly, though he soon loses himself in the surrounding madness, his mother is not. "He's my son and I love him," Alison Jear reassures the audience, followed by "I will search every pond," where George Stiles's music sounds as if it might go on to "climb every fountain".

Steven Dexter's direction cleverly addresses adults and youngsters. So although Cat's frenetic passion for a domestic puss (Julie Jupp), eagerly reciprocated and very funny, may pass over the heads of the young ones, the pun-faced expressions of Rachel Izzen's Hen will be there to make the children laugh.

And so to the duck stool, the Pointer with no sense of direction and the Retriever who cannot retrieve; then to the snowstorm and finally the transformation scene, just as in any panto. Stiles's victory march music announces the change from Duckling to Swan, and the show ends with a dreadful pun on Cygnet. Delightful.

JEREMY KINGSTON

Making free with a genie

Aladdin

Players'

UNDER the arches at Embankment, just along from the eternal queue of young tourists waiting to get into Heaven (the nightclub), one comes across an anomaly. Every night (Monday excepted) Victorian vaudeville rises from the grave at the Players' Theatre. The spirit of music hall is pretty sprightly considering, cracking jokes between its dentures and with a monocled eye on the lady spectators ("Are you moving, madam, because you're being molested? Or because you aren't?").

The audience — an odd crowd of pin-striped but not quite couth gents, their wives and a smattering of luvvies — seems heartily amused about the archaism of what is obviously their regular haunt. "As British as the flag," they cry in unison, piping Mr Chairman to the post, then lustily belting out the Players' anthem: "Oh! the fairies! Whoa the fairies! Nothing but splendour and feminine gender." You can sit through three-quarters of an hour of this kind of thing and then get *Aladdin* on top.

This year's Players' pantomime apparently "recreates the original burlesque by H.G. Byron (first performed in 1861)". If so, the punning lyrics about LSD and Aladdin "going to pot", suggest HG — ha-ho or no — must have been a man of positively mystical foresight.

Actually, the production is the more lively for making free with this museum piece. The genie may be Florence Nightingale, but Aladdin finds this lady's lamp down a recently closed coal mine and is accompanied by a couple of definitely contemporary Welshmen, Dai Hard and Gethyn Thair.

Some of the mock-operatic singing is fairly impressive. Karen Broughton (Princess Badroulbadour, Aladdin's beloved from Peking) floods the auditorium with a Queen of the Nightish soprano solo while washing undies in a wok and hanging them out on the Emperor's king-size pignol.

Nevertheless, the palace acrobats are a pitiful bunch. Too many of the performers, notably the girls playing boys, flapping their thighs and so on, indulge in painful ham-acting. Punters who consider the *Mikado* a bit sophisticated, find deliberately awful rhyming couplets a wheeze, and think boozing and oging en masse is magic, will, no doubt, return for more. Others, once out, may not be coaxed back for all the tea in China.

KATE BASSETT

ENTERTAINMENTS

OPERA & BALLET

COLESLIDE (PG): The Royal National Theatre's multi-award-winning production of J.B. Priestley's "The Day After Tomorrow".

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE (PG): The Royal Opera House's production of "The Day After Tomorrow".

ADOLPH (PG): The Royal Opera House's production of "The Day After Tomorrow".

SUNSET BOULEVARD (PG): The Royal Opera House's production of "The Day After Tomorrow".

THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW (PG): The Royal Opera House's production of "The Day After Tomorrow".

THEATRES

ADOLPH (PG): The Royal Opera House's production of "The Day After Tomorrow".

SUNSET BOULEVARD (PG): The Royal Opera House's production of "The Day After Tomorrow".

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Bridging the gap between reality and imagination

A new crossing over the Thames, to link the South Bank concert halls with Covent Garden, is the latest visionary project from one of the rising stars of British architecture. **Marcus Binney reports**

Touch the earth lightly is the motto of architecture's latest rising star. Streamlining, transparency, openness, slenderness and above all elegance are the hallmarks of Richard Horden's high-tech designs.

His is a world not just of buildings but of prototype lightweight structures that can withstand the harshest environments. Horden's award-winning Queen's Stand at Epsom has the simplicity of a Dufy drawing, its character determined by a few fast strokes of a pen.

If his buildings appear to float, it is partly because his inspiration and imagery come from the world of transport more than architecture. He draws constant comparisons between the Epsom stand and an ocean liner, and a block of apartments designed to sit beside Sydney Opera House has the tapered snout of a French TGV. His Skihaus, intended as a mobile mountain hut for the 21st century, is like a helicopter. And now his proposed Thames bridge seems akin to a well-rigged racing schooner.

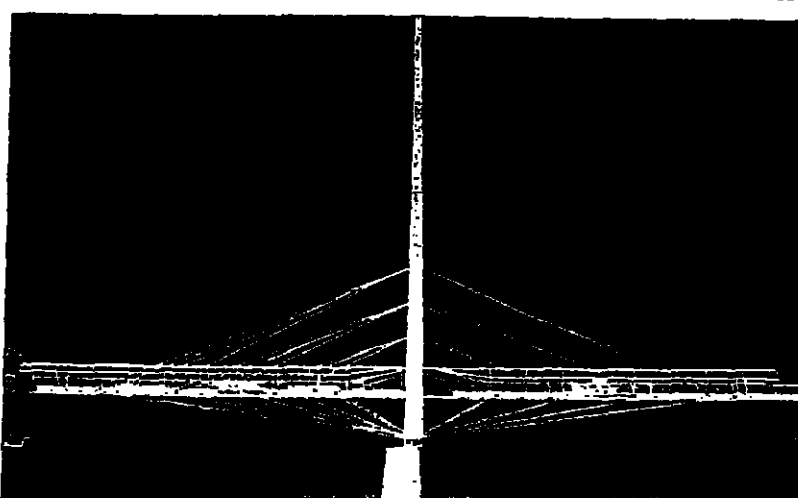
"Yachtsmen have an instinctive feeling for beauty," he says. "As a sport it's highly tuned to the appreciation of

nature. You feel the wind and the lightness on the water."

Horden grew up near Poole where he busied himself maintaining boats as well as sailing. After a spell with Nicholas Grimshaw he spent ten years with Norman Foster, working on projects which included the Sainsbury Centre in Norwich and the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank as well as the early stages of the Stansted Airport proposals.

He set up on his own in 1985 and worked from a ground floor office in Golden Square, Soho. "In summer the blue canopy comes down and the tables go out and anyone interested in our work can look at the models and have a cup of coffee," he says.

He speaks of the importance of Britain's new high-tech industries to his work. "I define British industry like this. Aerospace centred on Bristol, carburettor valley between London and Coventry, and an astonishing run of small marine



A model of Richard Horden's proposed new bridge across the Thames. Transparency and elegance characterise the architect's high-tech designs

enterprises along the south coast from the Hamble to Poole.

As Glasgow's contribution to the millennium Horden has designed a hundred-metre high steel observation tower that revolves with the wind yet weighs no more than the rudder of the Queen Mary. Whether Glasgow can raise the funds is not yet clear but the Swiss are now considering erecting a version on Lake Zurich.

His latest visionary project is for a new bridge across the Thames, between Waterloo Bridge and Hungerford Bridge, which would link the South Bank concert halls with Covent Garden. "The idea came from the Pont des Arts in Paris, connecting the Louvre with the Latin Quarter," he says.

Horden's ingenuity has been to interest Shell in the bridge as a means of marking its centenary in 1997. "They are used to building oil-rigs and immediately saw how simple it would be to construct,"

he adds. Shell would be combining philanthropy with a highly practical link between the Shell International building on the South Bank and Shell Mex House on the north.

As the bridge is for pedestrians only the structure is unusually slender, with cable stays fanned out above and below the deck like ship's rigging. Horden concedes: "The mass is telescopic and can be extended for events and covered with flags and banners."

At either end Horden proposes to slip clear glass tubes over the bridge so you can sit in the sun, protected from the wind, enjoying the spectacular views. He also proposes minimalist cafes consisting of no more than a counter and bar stools.

The brilliance of the concept is that it takes you in a straight line from The Strand and its theatres to the Festival Hall on the South Bank without a single flight of steps, though there are open ramps, like ship's gangways, connecting with the Embankment below. Shell, for all its enthusiasm, will not pay for the bridge alone, but Horden believes he can generate the necessary support. "In design you must always be an optimist,"

OPERA: A Smetana comedy to delight the connoisseurs at ENO; and a Lully rarity in Paris

Merry widows with a few regrets

Two Widows
Coliseum

Smetana's *Two Widows* is an absolutely lovely piece, truly an opera for connoisseurs. Among much else it is famous for being a special favourite of Richard Strauss's. Whenever he went to Prague he sent a polite request in advance for it to be included in the National Theatre's repertoire, and you can see why: the mixture of high comedy and gentle sentiment, plus Smetana's amazing skill at setting everyday conversation to music, must have appealed greatly to a composer trading in similar commodities.

It is also plainly close to David Pountney's heart. The new production that opened at the Coliseum on Monday is his third stab at it, after Wexford and Scottish Opera. The fact that it doesn't quite come off has nothing to do with the merits of the piece, nor with Pountney's sympathetic approach to it — his quirky, inconsequential sense of humour is perfectly suited to the matter in hand. But the Coliseum is simply too big for what is basically a four-handed comedy of manners, the only one of Smetana's operas not drawn from a Czech source (it is based on a one-act French farce), and Mark Thompson's colourful set, sumptuously lit by Paul Pyant, forces too much of the action onstage.

One widow is merry, the other (her cousin) melancholy, the former seeing widowhood as a release, the latter wracked by guilt at not having loved her deceased husband and so (temporarily) impervious to the tenor suitor who has always adored her. The action is concerned with merry plots to break down her reserve, the merriest being the suitor's persistent and supremely ineffective poaching, aimed at gaining admittance to the country house in which she is staying.

Smetana clothes all this in music of sublime wit and compassion. Unconstrained by tradition, his invention strays far and wide: some of his harmonic progressions are as adventurous as they are quirky, the all-pervasive polka rhythms keep the piece on the move, and the love music builds up a potent head of erotic steam. One disadvantage of Thompson's updating

the action to well into the 20th century is that you are in danger of overlooking how astonishingly modern the music is for 1874. Smetana really was a kind of Czech Chabrier.

In that context Adam Fischer's conducting was frankly not good enough: slack rhythms (in this of all pieces), barely acceptable standard of ensemble (the playing simply wasn't sufficiently together), flabby overall sound — I know Smetana was an inveterate over-scoring, but the textures can be sorted out better than this. Maybe the Coliseum can no longer afford sufficient rehearsal time. The lack of point, wit and definition was infinitely dispiriting.

And in that context the triumph of Anne-Marie Owens as the melancholy Aneska

was all the greater. Her firm, vibrant mezzo is in pristine state (Aneska cannot be too far away now), she is an economical comic (a raised eyebrow, a tilt of the head, earn good laughs) and, as her unforgettable Charlotte in *Werther* suggested, she can convey moral probity without a hint of sanctimoniousness.

Not for nothing does John Tyrrell's programme note dub Aneska "Florentine in Bohemia". Owens and Smetana are ideally matched. In contrast, Marie McLaughlin's Karolina is perhaps too merry by half. She was not in easiest voice on Monday, and thus conveyed temptation to compensate by overplaying both vocally and histrionically. Expressive shading took her off the notes too often, and a Vita Sackville-West-style costume in the first act — jodhpurs, boots, monocle and cigarette holder — was perhaps too great a temptation for a soprano of McLaughlin's exuberant temperament. And I don't believe that even a widow as merry as this would bed down with one of her suitors at curtain-fall, certainly not in front of the rest of the company.

David Rendall was in fine voice as the suitor, and together with Owens made their exquisitely composed second-act duet the high point of the evening. The comic gamekeeper is not one of Smetana's great roles, but the redoubtable Donald Adams did what he could with it, resolutely declining to be upstaged by the adorable Collie he had in tow. Sally Harrison and Mark Le Brocq sang sweetly as two merry peasants, minor roles needlessly added by Smetana in his revision of 1878.

Despite the reservations noted, *Two Widows* is well worth a visit. The second of the two short acts is pure gold, from the entr'acte based on the ensuing *perpetuum mobile* patter duet for the widows, to the mezzo-tenor duet with its eloquent *melodrame* declaration of love, the scene for mezzo (beautifully delivered by Owens), through to the toe-tapping finale. The whole sequence has a *Falstaffian* zest, and it's not every day that you encounter such musical riches.

RODNEY MILNES

Anne-Marie Owens, Donald Adams and Marie McLaughlin in David Pountney's staging of *Two Widows*, the only one of Smetana's operas not drawn from a Czech source

ARTS BRIEFING

Down at heel

THE most eagerly anticipated musical of the Broadway season, *The Red Shoes*, closed this week at the Gershwin Theatre after just five performances and a fraught rehearsal period. The £5 million musical, based on the classic Powell and Pressburger ballet film of 1948, had a score by Julie Styne (*Funny Girl*, *Cygnus*) and was directed by Hollywood veteran Stanley Donen. In the run-up to last week's New York opening, several leading figures were replaced, including Britain's Roger Rees, the leading man, and Simon Gray, the librettist.

FROM *Lust* to sexual harassment: Denis Lawson returns to the West End on January 11, succeeding David Suchet in *Oleanna* (at the Duke of York's) as a teacher brought low by a student who claims he harassed her. Irish actress Michelle Fairley follows Lia Williams as his accuser in David Mamet's two-hander, first seen in June at the Royal Court.

Vick appointed

GRAHAM VICK, one of Britain's most prolific opera directors, has been appointed director of productions at Glyndebourne. When the new opera house opens next summer he will stage *Eugene Onegin*, and will follow this with a new production each year thereafter. Vick worked at Glyndebourne briefly as a staff producer in 1977 but did not return until last year, when he directed *The Queen of Spades*.

Plain words lavishly set

One idly talks of Roland and others as Lully's creations, but in truth they are plays by Philippe Quinault to which Lully gave the convenience of song and the decoration of dancing. Music was the justification for the presentation of so many people on stage, and for the lavishness of the decor, and these aspects of ostentation and sumptuousness seem to be as necessary to the pieces as an orchestra in the pit. How to provide the visual splendour is as much of a problem as how to deliver the long yards of Lully's recitative or to ginger up the plainness, so often, of his orchestral music. And the centrality of the words may be the main reason why these works resist export.

Roland
Théâtre des
Champs-Élysées,
Paris

groups, and his performance has moments of characteristic dash. If there is also much of a disappointing squareness, one can only blame the pallidity of the score: so often Lully sounds like Rameau with everything interesting carefully taken out.

Less readily excusable are William Orlandi's kitsch sets. The prevailing scent of camp in the design becomes useful only in allowing the director, Gilbert Dell, to give the chorus a role as sneering observers which is in keeping with their costuming in pastel tangerine and ostrich feathers. It is rather nice that one highly mannered group of people — the cast of principals — can be excused by another.

As for those principals, achievement is patchy. One

curiosity of the piece is that its two halves are almost separate operas, the first dominated by a pair of lovers, Angélique and Médor, the second by Roland in his madness and recovery. Here the lovers are set aside by language, since the respective singers, Ann Panagoulas and Harry Nicoll, are the only members of the cast whose first language is not French. In an intended play, this matters. Veronique Gens and Gilles Ragon, in other roles, cannot disguise their advantage.

But then José van Dam, though singing his native language, sounds and looks woefully out of place as Roland. Van Dam is an artist of compelling honesty, appearing in an opera — and in a production — where all is pretence. One can understand, and indeed applaud, his wish to challenge himself with new repertory: few singers of his stature are so adventurous. But the price of adventure is the occasional mistake, and this is one of them.

PAUL GRIFFITHS

SHOP TILL YOU TAKE IN A SHOW

LONDON Jan 7-8

NO SOONER is Christmas over than the January sales begin — and, with this in mind, the Theatre Club has arranged a special package to combine shopping with a night at the theatre and accommodation in a hotel conveniently placed for all the bargains.

The package comprises tickets for Sir Peter Hall's *Plaf*, starring Elaine Paige at the Piccadilly Theatre on either Friday (January 7) or Saturday evening, and two nights' bed and breakfast at a Radisson Edwardian hotel. *Plaf* traces the often violent and tragic life of the Little Sparrow, Edith Piaf, from her poverty-stricken beginnings, through fame and fortune and on to her untimely death. Paige is Britain's leading lady of the musical stage, the star of *Evita*, *Cats* and many more blockbusters.

THE TIMES
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FIVE CARIBBEAN HOLIDAYS FOR TWO TO BE WONE

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THE TIMES
THIS FRIDAY

Displays of petulance mar magnificent year for European Tour's leading golfer

Montgomery must win hearts

John Hopkins believes the Scot will gain due recognition only when he learns to curb his temper



Let us first praise Colin Montgomerie, the leading money-winner in Europe in the golf season that has just ended. We shall consider later whether or not to bury him.

Montgomerie has come so far so fast it is a surprise to discover that in 1986 he was still a student at Baptist University in Houston, Texas, where he got a degree in business management and law. After he had turned professional in the autumn of 1987 he handed out business cards that read: "Colin S. Montgomerie BA, European Tour Golf Professional".

To have become No 1 in Europe in only his sixth full season is quick. It took Nick Faldo seven years to reach that position. Bernhard Langer, nine, and Ian Woosnam, 11, though José María Olazábal did it in his first season as a professional. Montgomerie, who was 30 last June, is at present ranked fourteenth in

'He needs a grain of humility to enter his soul, a smile to brighten his features, an equanimity to be evident in his manner on course'

the world. "What impresses me about Colin is that he drives the ball so well," Dave Marr, the former US PGA champion who is now a golf commentator for BBC television, said.

"It is easy to say that he is a left-to-right hitter, which he is. But I am impressed at how well he draws the ball from the tee when he wants to. In the three years I have been watching him he has improved so much. He is in his prime now. The years between 30 and 38 are when he should have a feast."

Montgomerie's year to end all years began slowly, though he was second in the Johnnie Walker Asian Classic behind his hero, Faldo, and in the Volvo PGA behind Bernhard Langer. In between these events he was second in the Scottish PGA, a minor tournament.

When he finished fifth in the Bell's Scottish Open and missed the cut in the Open the following week, Montgomerie, never one to avoid basking in self-pity, began to sulk

to himself at his lack of success.

Not for long, though. Seven days after Norman's conquest of Sandwich, Montgomerie achieved his third victory as a professional. Helped by powerful driving that was so straight he missed only one fairway in his last two rounds, he took the Dutch Open by one stroke.

More good performances followed as his confidence rose, including a fine Ryder Cup, when he and Faldo won 2½ points out of a possible four and he beat Lee Janzen in the singles. Montgomerie was dominant and dogged in winning the Volvo Masters in October and his record-breaking season was concluded last Sunday when he came fourth in the Johnnie Walker world championship in Jamaica.

Montgomerie, then, can play a bit. It is relevant to ask whether he can also behave. P.G. Wodehouse observed that he had no difficulty in distinguishing between a ray of sunshine and a Scotsman with a grievance. He might have been talking of Montgomerie who, on golf courses around the world, often appears to harbour not just one, but half a dozen grievances.

Just when you want to like Montgomerie, to admire his velvet touch on the greens, he is swayed by his articulate charm, he sends these good intentions to all points of the compass with a display of petulance that might normally be demonstrated by a small child.

It was a colleague on these pages who wrote mischievously of Montgomerie before the Ryder Cup: "... no longer the baby of the family since his wife, Elmore, gave birth last March".

The demonstrations of Montgomerie's temper have been thick and fast. He verbally abused a woman ball-spotter in the Toyota World Match Play Championship at Wentworth. The previous week he had hardly been a paragon after Scotland's defeat by Paraguay in the Dunhill Cup. In the fourth round in Jamaica, where he plummeted from three strokes behind Larry Mize, the eventual winner, to 12 strokes behind after his worst round of the week, there was a lot of tutting and strutting, growling and glaring.

"We've all got pressures in our work," John Simpson, Montgomerie's manager, said in an attempt to explain away his client's behaviour. "We all have our flashpoints, whether it's a telephone not working or a hotel booking that should



Montgomery shows his fine touch at the Johnnie Walker world championship in Jamaica

have been made but hasn't been. We've talked to Monty about this and he is aware of it. He is trying. He wrote a letter to that lady at Wentworth, for example, and Bernhard Gallacher told me the other day that she has become one of his greatest supporters."

Perhaps it has all come too quickly, and too easily for Montgomerie, who has improved his position in the European money list every year. He needs a grain of humility to enter his soul, a smile to brighten his features, an equanimity and politeness to be evident in his manner on

the golf course. Then one will recognise him for being the talented golfer on the fringe of true international stardom that he is.

The world of golf is at Montgomerie's feet. A prospect that exceeds, just the size of his shoes. "He should be licking his chops for '94,"

Marr said. Some of us, though, are ducking for cover fearing that Montgomerie's exposure next year as Europe's leading money-winner will be accompanied by more of the tantrums of which we have become so heartily fed up. Would that he will prove us wrong.

Open season enjoyed by fly-fishermen

Brian Clarke examines how changes to long-accepted ways are supported by new developments in trout fishing

Many trout fisheries that in the past have been closed in the autumn are this year staying open to the year's end. Some fisheries will not be closing at all, enabling anglers to fish for trout continuously from the end of 1993 to the start of the 1994 season in the spring.

Trout fishing has been hit hard by the recession and more fishery owners have begun to extend their season to balance the books. Advances in breeding techniques, among other things, have led to the development of sexless rainbow trout fish capable of providing sport in winter, instead of becoming spawning-bound as many rainbows have in the past.

Many fisheries are now stocking only with these triploid fish, or with female fish of predictable spawning behaviour. The result is that while the winter close season for brown trout still applies, a substantial minority of Britain's lake fisheries will again be open for rainbow trout, and fly-fishermen in some parts of the country will have the opportunity to practise their sport at Christmas, for the first time.

Winter fly-fishing is not something that will appeal to everyone. The very nature of the sport is based on fishing in mid-year, when fly hatches are most intense and the fish are most active.

Many anglers simply believe in giving the trout a rest. Those who do decide to fish, however, will have plenty of options to choose from. They range from the best biggest public lakes to the smallest, privately-managed pools.

While no-one can go to big lakes in winter and expect the kind of fishing that they would find in mid-year, the average size of individual fish caught is likely to be high. The ambition of many reservoir bank-fishers — to catch a grown-on 5lb rainbow — is a possibility, provided the weather is settled and the water temperature stays above 5°C.

It is water temperature, above all, that will dictate results. Cold water has two

effects. The first is that as temperatures drop, so fly hatches diminish. The second is that the colder it gets, the slower the metabolism of a trout becomes and the less food it needs. With the reduced interest in food comes a reduced interest in artificial flies and an unwillingness to burn up energy chasing anything moved at speed.

Lure fishermen will need smaller flies than in summer, and will need to retrieve them slowly. Nymph fishermen will want to fish as usual, remembering that soft hackles on a fly can give movement without the need for physical speed, and that a spot of muted colour can help attract attention, even in a near-static fly.

Because of the effect that cold water has on fish behaviour, finding the warmest water in a lake is a priority.

There are no certainties, but there are some rules of thumb. The most useful is to fish deep water — upwind in a cold wind not only changes water temperature, but pushes the surface along, causing an accumulation of either cold or warm water to pile up on the downwind side.

On small lakes, where wind action may have little effect, deep water is the place to be on a cold day. Less-deep water may produce a hatch of fly on a sunny day. Small, spring-fed lakes are affected less by the cold than small, stream-fed lakes and the angler who knows where springs well up in a lake bed, and can put his fly among them, may surprise waters.

A note of caution is worth adding about these small waters, however, especially for those living in the North and Wales. While the spring-fed lakes of the South have some protection against the frost, and while lakes the size of Grahams are unlikely to freeze over, the same clearly is not true everywhere.

In many areas a long, cold spell can mean a frozen lake — and the ice will stop fishing more effectively than any keeper's keys.

'Winter fly-fishing will not appeal to everyone. The nature of the sport is based on fishing in mid-year.'

Leeds will provide serious test for Newcastle

By PETER BALL AND KEITH PIKE

ELEVEN days ago, Newcastle United measured themselves against Manchester United and emerged feeling quietly pleased. This evening they have a second, and more immediately relevant test of their progress with the visit of Leeds United.

For the moment, as Kevin Keegan, the Newcastle manager, admitted after the 1-1 draw at St James' Park, the FA Cup Premiership leaders cannot be caught, even if Newcastle ultimately fulfil Keegan's prophecy and at last give Tyneside one of the nation's great powers. But if Manchester are disappearing over the horizon, Leeds, the pacemakers for the clubs pursuing a Uefa Cup place, are within reach, four points ahead of Newcastle, who have a game in hand.

"Even at this early stage it's a six-pointer for both of us," Keegan said yesterday. "If we don't want to get left behind we need to win something from this game. We have as good a chance as anybody of finishing second."

"Leeds and ourselves are the two form sides at the moment. If we beat them we're in the driving seat. It's a fascinating prospect." With all tickets sold guaranteeing another vibrant atmosphere at St James' in a week when traditionally attendances fall, Keegan did not exaggerate the game's appeal.

Like Manchester United, Newcastle have won a host of friends for the quality of their football, but Leeds will provide a serious test. In some ways, with their competitive approach and direct, quick attacks, they may prove more difficult opposition for Newcastle's little ball players than Manchester

United. Newcastle's only defeat recently was against Arsenal, whose power at dead ball kicks proved decisive.

Much will depend, though, on how Leeds' sometimes suspect defence copes with the quick, clever Newcastle attacks, orchestrated by Beardsley and their former player, Scott Sellars, who has been in outstanding form since joining Newcastle after a second unwelcome spell at Elland Road.

With Beardsley scoring regularly as well as joining Sellars in supplying the prolific Cole, Leeds could be fully stretched, and they may have to cope without Strachan, who has a hamstring injury. Roca is standing by.

Pemberton and Wetherall are both fit, giving Howard Wilkinson a full squad of defenders to choose from, but Speed faces a fitness test to see if he can return to join what is likely to be a decisive midfield battle, with

McAllister, who has been in fine form this season, capable of emerging as the dominant influence.

With Sellars, Bracewell and Beresford all fit, Newcastle are at full strength. The prospect is mouth-watering.

Les Ferdinand, the Queens Park Rangers striker, has been suspended for one match after being sent off in the match against Liverpool at Anfield on December 8. Vic Callow, the referee who dismissed Ferdinand for a second bookable offence after he had kicked the ball away, "is convinced he made the right decision" and had refused to reconsider, an FA spokesman said. Ferdinand will miss the home match against Oldham Athletic on Monday.

Wolverhampton Wanderers have paid Bournemouth £350,000 for Neil Masters, 21, the former Northern Ireland youth international defender.



Sellars supplier

Minding what matters on court

ONLY true tennis aficionados will be able to place Brad Gilbert. Apart from stubble worthy of Desperate Dan, a walk like a diver on the seabed and a competitive spirit that led to an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation with David Wheaton in the semi-final of the Inaugural Grand Slam Cup, there is nothing memorable about the Californian.

He has no blazing forehead, no missile serve, no sweet backhand, just a happy knack of winning tennis matches. \$5 million-worth of them, and a natural talent for driving opponents to distraction. John McEnroe was so ashamed of losing to Gilbert in the 1986 Masters that he retired for six months.

Gilbert recalls the match. "His eyes gave him away first. They had the look of a kid who had just set fire to the neighbour's cat scared and mean. On a changeover he

snarled over in my direction: 'Gilbert, you don't deserve to be on the same court as me.' He was heading over the edge." Gilbert won 5-7, 6-4, 6-1 and loved every minute. The two were never great friends.

Anyone who can psyche-out Mac must be worth reading, and *Winning Ugly* (subtitled: *Mental Warfare in Tennis*) — Tales from the Tour and Lessons from a Master — does not disappoint. Part manual of psychology, part biography, part anecdote, it gives an insight into the workings of the mind-game.

Gilbert's theory of winning matches is simple enough and as applicable to the club hacker as the pro. Think who is doing what to whom and then try to make sure you're

doing what you want, not what your opponent wants. Surprisingly few players understand that, he claims.

When he starts to lose, Boris Becker will blame himself rather than working out what his opponent is doing and trying to counteract it. This is Gilbert on facing Becker, — the champion version, not the present imitation — in a section quaintly titled "Busting my butt for Boris".

"Becker is like a thoroughbred. His physicality, power and movement are so pure it can be intimidating. He's big and he plays big. I get myself ready by reminding myself 'Don't be impressed. Don't let his presence be overwhelming. Keep your eye on your game plan and not on his game'. I have to do that or I'd take one look at what Becker brings to the court and retire."

Gilbert's record against Becker is surprisingly good. He once beat the German from two sets and 0-3 down in the fourth round of the US Open, a match he examines in detail. Gilbert gives Becker no pace, works his forehand, which is strong but brittle and tries to move him wide on the backhand. That is the theory. When Becker is on song, Gilbert admits he has no chance, which is a refreshing confession in itself.

Much of the book is aimed at the club player and some of it is written in an impenetrable California-speak, but neither instruction nor dialect overwhelms the player's-eye account of a McEnroe tantrum or a Lendl go-slow. This is a gem. Read it.

Winning Ugly by Brad Gilbert and Steve Jamison, Birch Lane Press. Available from The Tennis Bookshop, West Gate, Moyle Court, Nr Ringwood, Hants BH24 3NF. Tel: 0425-480518.

ANDREW LONGMORE

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BBC1

6.00 Business Breakfast
7.00 BBC Breakfast News
9.05 Defenders of the Earth
Red Hunter
10.00 News
10.30 Good Morning
12.15 People
12.55 Regional News
1.00 News
1.30 Neighbours
2.15 Jackaroo
3.30 Pingu
5.00 News
5.35 Neighbours
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Regional News
7.00 Film: Doctor in the House
8.30 Spring
9.00 Nine O'Clock News
9.30 Waiting For God
10.00 Film: Revenge
11.55 Film: Carr
12.15 News
1.25am Weather

RADIO 1

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11.00-12.00
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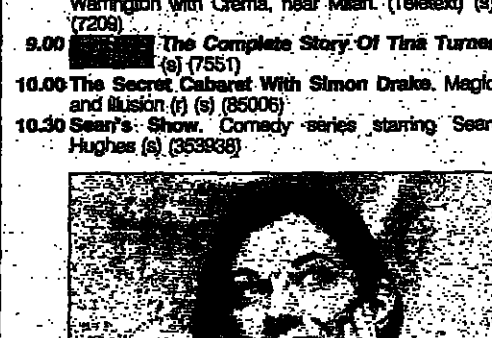
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RADIO 69341 CLASS

CHANNEL 4

- 6.30 *Ulysses 31*. Scientific fiction animation (r) (87261)
- 7.00 *The Big Breakfast* (18483)
- 9.00 *Saved by the Bell*. American college campus comedy (81613)
- 9.30 *Grin Tales*. Rick Mayell with an animated version of the Brothers Grimm tale *The Boots of Buffalo Leather* (r) (4798261)
- 9.45 *The Masked Singer*. The masked hero and his Toronto search for a gang of outlaws (482938) 10.15 *Grin Tales*. Animated version of *The Gnome*, by the Brothers Grimm (r) (1393193)
- 10.30 *Spiff and Hercules*. Cat and dog cartoon (r) (2591377) 10.55 *Dennis* (r) (6559813)
- 11.00 *Strangers*. Children's adventure serial from New Zealand (r) (5209) 11.30 *Shirley and the Gossamer*. Animated version of the fairy tale *Shirley* (r) (6533)
- 12.00 *The Legend of White Fang*. Animated adventure of Jack London's Yukon-based canine hero (84377) 12.30 *Sesame Street*. The guest is Carole Channing (82223)
- 1.30 *Julia*. American domestic comedy series starring Julie Andrews (23894)
- 2.00 *The New Zealand Stallion*. (1992) starring David A. Traversa. A made-for-television family drama about Owen, a teenage orphan with a stallion as a pet, who faces eviction from his Welsh farm after his grandfathers dies and her uncle decides to sell up to a property developer. Directed by Peter Edwards (50093)
- 3.45 *Mr. A*. A man is kidnapped from the outside world by his personal stereo (r) (8187803)
- 4.10 *All Balls*. Animation (r) (7841375)
- 4.30 *Fifteen to One*. (Teletext) (r) (890)
- 5.00 *Omigod Winifred Show*. The guests are people who have been caught in compromising positions at the parties. (Teletext) (r) (890)
- 5.50 *Laurel and Hardy*. Animation (653735)
- 6.00 *Crystal Ball Magic*. Special with Richard O'Brien (r) (83272)
- 7.00 *Channel 4 News*. (Teletext) and weather (391250)
- 7.50 *Christmas in New York*. TV special. How New York's most famous Christmas tree, the World Trade Center tree, built in 1978. (Teletext) (810006)
- 8.00 *Brookside*. Topical soap set in a suburban Merseyside cliche. (Teletext) (8174)
- 8.30 *Traveling*. Pete McCarthy visits Hamburg and



Laurie Pike on cable watch (11.05pm)

11.05 News(a) York: Laurie Pike introduces excerpts from NY1; New York's 24-hour cable news channel (283735)

11.35 Film: *Heavy Petting* (1988). A lighthearted documentary examining attitudes to teenage sexuality in America through the health-education films and teen movies of the 1950s. Directed by Obba Babatundé (Teletext) (233445)

1.00 Movie/watch (f) (a) (34217)

1.30 LA: Law. American courtroom drama series (f)

SATELLITE

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SPORT

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 22 1993

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SEASON ON TROUT

England happy to wait for right man

By Keith Pike



Kendall: available

THE Football Association may have to abandon its plan to have a full-time England manager installed in the spring and settle instead on a temporary appointment until the summer.

Jimmy Armfield, the former England captain recruited by the FA to act as an adviser in the search for Graham Taylor's successor, confirmed yesterday that Kevin Keegan, the Newcastle United manager, was one of "four or five" people on his shortlist, and conceded that England may have to wait to get their man.

"If the chairman [Sir Bert Millichip] feels there is someone strong enough who is with a club and we could wait, then

the chairman would approach the chairman of that club and ask if that person would become available in the summer," Armfield said.

"We wouldn't want to be prising him [Keegan] away from Newcastle at this stage. That would only alienate all the fans in that area against the England team."

Howard Wilkinson, the Leeds United manager — like Keegan under contract to a club that has said it will fight to prevent losing him — Howard Kendall, who resigned from Everton on December 4, and Terry Venables, the former Tottenham Hotspur chief executive, will also be names discussed when Armfield meets the four-strong FA international sub-committee em-

powered to select the new manager. Bobby Robson, the former England manager dismissed recently as coach of Sporting Lisbon, might also be a contender.

An FA spokesman said yesterday that no date has yet been fixed for that meeting, although it is thought possible that the sub-committee comprising Millichip, Graham Kelly, the chief executive of the FA, Ian Stott, the Oldham Athletic chairman, and Noel White, the director and former chairman of Liverpool, could convene as early as tomorrow.

When Kelly announced Armfield's appointment on November 30, he said that the FA hoped to have selected a full-time manager before England's next game, against

Denmark at Wembley on March 9, but said that time was against them, and stressed the need for "the right appointment, rather than a hurried or mistaken appointment."

If it were decided to approach a manager under contract to a club, compensation would be paid "providing the amount was reasonable".

Armfield had already said he thought Keegan was the obvious choice, and having endorsed his credentials subsequently said he was "not about to change horses in midstream", but the FA's options appeared to be reduced when Keegan then signed a new contract with Newcastle, while others including Wilkinson, Gerry Francis, of Queens

Park Rangers, and Ron Atkinson, the Aston Villa manager, said they did not wish to be considered. Yesterday, though, Armfield echoed Kelly's belief that nobody can be discounted.

Speaking on BBC Radio, which employs him as a commentator, Armfield said: "I'm not going to give you a definite name because the chairman said before the World Cup draw that he wouldn't really want to be breaking into anyone's season, and I think that is important."

"It would be someone who is available, someone like Howard Kendall. We can't resolve any names until we all get together."

Dismissing speculation that

he would be recommending Venables, Armfield said: "At this stage, four or five names are in my mind and quite clearly he is one of the people available, but there are other people as well. It will go to the committee and the committee will decide."

Armfield has also been given a wider-ranging brief by the FA, to advise on a restructuring of the England management set-up, and has consulted with Wilkinson, who said yesterday: "I had a conversation with Jimmy Armfield that lasted about two hours. We both agreed that the content of the conversation was private and will remain private."

Leeds test, page 30

ICC will pair overseas and home umpires in Test cricket

By Ivo Tennant

A PANEL of 20 international umpires is to be set up by the International Cricket Council (ICC) to officiate at all Test matches over the next three years, starting in February. The £1.1 million sponsorship by National Grid will also cover the costs of the match referees.

The boards of each ICC member country have been asked to nominate two individuals towards the panel. England will supply four, on account of having a large pool of experienced umpires and because the majority of Test matches are played in the English winter. Other than Harold "Dicky" Bird, who will stand in the first two Tests between New Zealand and Pakistan in February, the names, which have been drawn up already, will not be disclosed until next year.

The idea is that an umpire from the panel will stand alongside one nominated by the host country in each match. By the end of next September, when 18 Tests will have been played, the panel will be revised. Referees and captains will give ICC their views on the umpires' performances.

A touring side will no longer have the right of appeal over appointments made by the host country, as, for example, was the case during the 1980s when Pakistan objected to the retention of David Constant for Tests in England. Any criticisms of the panel will be made to David Richards, the ICC chief executive, who stressed yesterday he would be seeking constructive comments.

Remuneration for the panel will vary considerably. Each ICC country will have to decide how much to pay its umpires, who will receive the same fee whether officiating at home or abroad, in addition to a flat rate of £200 per Test from National Grid. Thus next summer, Bird, earning £2,000 a match, may well find himself partnered by an umpire from the Third World on

a quarter as much.

Bird, who is 60 and has umpired in 56 Tests, admitted yesterday he would have liked a three-year contract but said this system would give him a new lease of life. "I am not a very good traveller but I enjoy it when I arrive." He was particularly pleased that there would still be the chance for an inexperienced umpire to stand in his own country and that there would be less of "the massive appealing which has crept into the game".

He will find it a strange experience, he said, to walk out at Lord's partnered by an Indian or an Australian. ICC expects the system to provide sufficient experience for emerging umpires to reach the standard required for appointment to the panel in due course. Funds will be set aside for the development of umpiring worldwide.

As Bird emphasised, the introduction of this panel will ensure there will be less suspicion of biased umpiring. The success of experiments in Zimbabwe, South Africa and West Indies during the past year convinced ICC and umpires, who dislike being referred to as "neutral" since they are all supposedly impartial, of the benefits of having a full-time panel.

ICC announced match referees for Test series early next year. They will be Raman Subba Row for New Zealand v Pakistan, which starts on February 10, and New Zealand v India the following month; Sunil Gavaskar for West Indies v England (February 19-March 7) and John Reid (the last four Tests); Donald Carr for South Africa v Australia, starting on February 19. The panel will not initially apply for limited-overs international matches. It is hoped that umpires for these and World Cup matches will be sponsored in future. National Grid have agreed to sponsor the next Test match umpire's conference.

Pakistan draw, page 28



Dickie Bird and ICC chief executive David Richards after the announcement of Bird's first assignment as one of a neutral umpiring panel

Barbarians team, page 28

Stewart keeps Surrey waiting

By Alan Lee, Cricket Correspondent

ALEC Stewart left the Oval after two hours of meetings yesterday, still unwilling to confirm that he will continue as the captain of Surrey cricket club next season.

Stewart, vice-captain to Mike Atherton on England's forthcoming Caribbean tour, remains angry over the way in which Geoff Arnold was forced out of the coach's job by Surrey and anxious over the appointment of Mike Edwards as a newly-created role as director of cricket.

"I still haven't accepted the captaincy," he said last night. "I am not saying I won't do it. I

want to captain Surrey. But I am not going to accept it until I know how the club is going to sort things out."

Stewart plainly will not be hurried into a decision and intends to wait until Surrey appoint their new chief coach before he commits himself.

Clyde Woodman, chief executive of the county, is outwardly unworried by the delay. "Our total assumption is that Alec will be our captain next season," he said. "We have no one else in mind. Our new arrangements are going to take some time to bed down and Alec naturally needs to

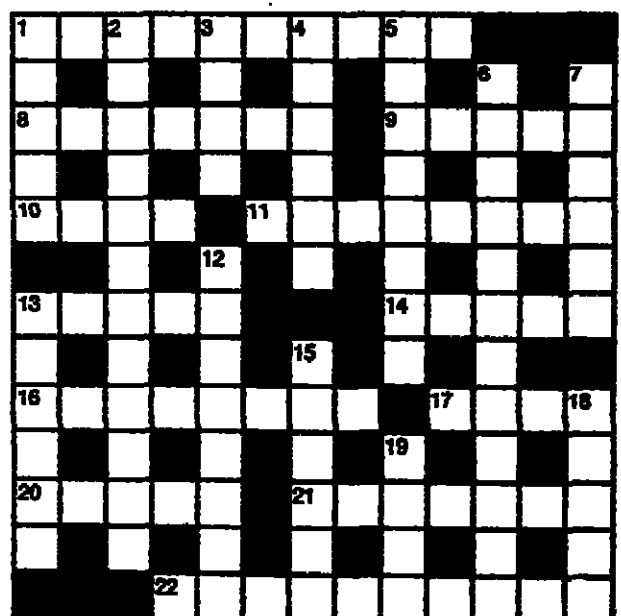
know who the new coach will be. But I don't think there is a serious issue here."

It is true that Alec expressed strong concern about Geoff Arnold's departure and I can appreciate that. Geoff was here a very long time. He is the only coach that Alec and some of the other players have known. But I believe we are moving forward in the management of the cricket and yesterday's meetings helped Alec understand the position."

Woodman described the role of Edwards as "an off-the-field supremo" and this, too, may be causing Stewart some

anxiety. Edwards, 53, has been away from the first-class game since his playing days ended in 1974 but is being installed as a strategist. Where his authority ends and the captain's begins evidently has yet to be settled.

Surrey's upheavals began when a policy report from the cricket committee, chaired by Arnold Long, was rejected by the club management. Arnold subsequently left and Long's position may now be at risk, following the decision to set up a working party to inquire into the way the county's cricket should be run.



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Just released for Christmas: The Times Crosswords — Book 17. The Times Concise Crosswords — Book 5. The Sunday Times Crosswords — Book 12. £4.25 each.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 45

ACROSS

- 1 Recovery after initial tiredness (6,4)
- 8 Content of sandwich (7)
- 9 Separate part (5)
- 10 Composer of Rule Britannia! (4)
- 11 Sharp vision (5,3)
- 13 Concentrated burst of fire (5)
- 14 Where the deliciously happy walk (2,3)
- 16 Of the style of Palladio, Sheraton (8)
- 17 Second-hand (4)
- 20 Prevent from happening (5)
- 21 Coordinated police hunt for criminal (7)

22 First day of Holy Week (4,6)

SOLUTION TO NO 44

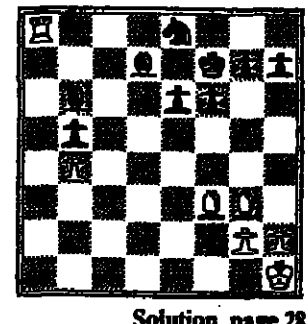
ACROSS: 4 Major 7 Libretto 8 Home 9 Beaufort 10 Statue 13 Strike 14 Rapier 15 Seclude 18 Hay fever 19 Tiff 20 Thatcher 21 Heath

DOWN: 1 All out 2 Abject 3 Seabed 4 Moquette 5 Jacobite 6 Rattle 11 Asphyxia 12 Eleventh 14 Refresh 15 Surety 16 Catchy 17 Deform

DOWN

- 1 Capital of Bulgaria (5)
- 2 River Kwai march (7,5)
- 3 Pin down (4)
- 4 American native tent (6)
- 5 The "Little Corporal" (8)
- 6 C of E governing body (7,5)
- 7 Superficial, deceptive appearance (6)
- 12 The Place of a Skull (6)
- 13 Gesture: conspicuous (6)
- 15 In no special order (6)
- 18 Simple song (5)
- 19 Kasparov's home town (4)

This position is a variation from the game Sorensen - Plaskett, Hastings Challengers 1989/90. How can White force a quick decision? Spectators wishing to visit this year's category 13 Hastings Premier should ring 0424 445348 for further details. Top grandmasters appearing will include Nunn, Krasenkov, Rogers and Shervakov.



Solution, page 28

WORD WATCHING

By Philip Howard

LATION

- a. A neutral particle
- b. Feudal service
- c. Motion

MARTEL

- a. A hammer
- b. Merchandise
- c. A migrating bird

DELUNDUNG

- a. Deer's faces
- b. Cropping by inundation
- c. The Javanese weasel-cat

Answers on page 28

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